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The Infinite Affection

Charles S. Macfarland

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THE INFINITE AFFECTION

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The Spirit Christlike
Jesus and the Prophets
The Old Puritanism and the New Age

The Infinite Affection

BY
CHARLES S. MACFARLAND
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CHARLES S. MACFARLAND

To My Teachers
at Yale

Preface

The following pages contain a Statement of Faith presented, in part, to an Ecclesiastical Council of the Fairfield West Consociation, convened at the South Norwalk Congregational Church, November 6, 1906.

It is published mainly because the congregation of the South Norwalk Church has expressed the desire that it be preserved, in the historic interest, and also for their own use.

Charles Stedman Macfarland.

The Congregational Parsonage,
South Norwalk, Connecticut.

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Introduction: Religion and Theology

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . with all thy mind. — *Matthew 22 : 37.*

RELIGION AND THEOLOGY

It is, for some reasons, a good thing for a minister to be called to a new parish. It is well that when he is so called, he should appear before a council of his fathers and brethren to bear witness to his faith, to indicate the substance of his gospel, and to set forth in order its fundamental grounds.

I am speaking of the value of this experience for himself. When other men ask him, What do you believe? What is the substance of your gospel? he is called upon to put the same questions to himself.

For many years, perhaps, he has been following the bent of his thought, from time to time abandoning some positions, taking up new points of view, seeking to follow the star of truth, and from week to week delivering his message as it may come to him, without always taking into account the larger implications of his new conceptions. His "little

systems have their day; they have their day and cease to be," only, however, to be succeeded by others.

That his faith is an harmonious whole, at least in its fundamental points, he believes. It may be, however, that he does not pause very often, or very completely, to set his intellectual house in order, or to apprehend that order as an order. Therefore, it is good for him, at certain times in his life, to be called upon to submit his theology to the thoughtful consideration of thoughtful men, because he is thus forced to submit it to his own consideration.

The transition from one pastorate to another offers him an opportunity and imposes upon him the obligation to do this. Installation councils have this great value, if no other.

The author of this book has been recently called to do this. During seven years at the university and divinity school, followed by six years of preaching, he has sought to satisfy the desire of every serious man to find and speak the truth. Upon the assumption

of a new ministry he found himself called upon to submit to a council of his peers and fathers " a comprehensive statement of Christian doctrine," and to justify himself as a religious teacher.

Perhaps the only value this book can claim is this: it sets forth, at the close of his first pastorate, the theology of a young man who has hospitably submitted himself to what is termed " modern thought." Therefore, if it is not worth while in itself, it may serve in some measure to indicate the symptoms and trend of present-day theology. However inadequately this may be done, the writer does not stand alone. He knows that a great body of other men share his feelings and accept his interpretations. He believes that, with all his personal limitations, he represents a school of thought. This does not mean, however, that he means to ignore the fact that other men, in ages past, have also done some thinking. He, with his modern brethren, has fallen heir to a magnificent inheritance of truth. It is his intention to build upon it, to fulfill rather than to destroy.

The following pages thus constitute an attempt to bring together, in related order and within a brief compass, statements of our ancient faiths in modern form and language and with present-day emphasis.

I have called this book by its title, because I conceive of all divine response to human seeking for the truth as the expression of God's love for man and his affectionate interest in man. I have tried to find a term to satisfy my own desire and to express what I mean by God. The most satisfying one that I can find is "The Infinite Affection."

In the quest to apprehend the moral order of the universe I find everywhere the response of the divine love. It is the witness of God's own nature as Creator and Preserver. It is the witness of the soul of man upon whom God has placed his own image. It is perfectly expressed in humanity in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is its interpreter.

It was Jesus, be it remembered, who laid the obligation on his followers to use the intellect in religion. He put it in a very striking way. He spoke of the "affection" of

the intellect. Man must *love* God *with the mind.* He believed that God and the eternal order were worthy of the thought of man.

In the life of religion the knowledge of the truth and the affection of consecrated devotion are thus by God joined together and may not by man be put asunder. Religion is both thought and feeling. Only an artificial distinction separates the two. Theology is not a superannuated appendix. It is an eternally enduring science. Religion, without it, is like

> "An infant crying in the night:
> An infant crying for the light:
> And with no language but a cry."

The deification of law and nature is neither religion nor theology. Over against nature, a God can have neither beginning nor end. He is the infinite subject of which the congregation of objects in nature is one expression. Nature is an organism of intelligible things. God is the eternal intellect himself. While there cannot be antagonism between the two, antithesis there must be. No one can bow in reverence to a nature below him

or to an idea within him. Religion, therefore, in its soul, is reverence and homage to a supreme Mind and Will. To such a Being there cannot fail to be a pathway from the sensitive, the intellectual and the moral highways of human life. Conscience may act as human before it is *discovered* to be divine. It does not reach its height until the discovery is made.

In both worshipper and worshipped there must be the same conscious moral order; one, the infinite archetype, the other, the finite image, susceptible to appeal and capable of response. The moral consciousness of man brings us face to face with the profound and momentous questions as to whether its sovereign intimations are verifiable and its relations eternal. Ethics inevitably perfect themselves in religion or degrade themselves into some lurking form of Hedonism. The life of duty must become the life of an enlightened affection. This moral relation between man and God needs to be adjusted to the order of the universe. Impersonal impulse must become personal affection and intelligent conviction.

The deeper man's religious experience becomes in the realm of the temporal, the profounder is his earnest interest in the eternal, as " deep calleth unto deep." Thus

" Belief or Unbelief
Bears upon life, determines its whole course."

The object of this book is to reveal, or, perhaps better, to suggest, some processes of thought, witnesses of revelation, and some means by which the mutual relations between God, man and the moral order may be gained, intensified, witnessed and apprehended.

The Nature of God

God is Love. — *I John 4 : 8.*

THE NATURE OF GOD

THE supreme and sovereign concern of humanity is the relation of the human soul to God. The quest for the Infinite is the chief end of man. The longing for the Eternal is the finest aspiration and the most universal yearning of his soul. As the hart panteth for the water-brooks, so thirsts the human heart to know the living God, in whom we live and move and have our being.

The sublimest scenes of human life are the child at his mother's knee uttering the lisping but eternal language of the human heart, and the aged saint, as the visions of the earth fade away and its voices are lost, commending the fleeing soul to the eternal, living God. The finest sight on earth is that of God's children kneeling together, with eyes and hearts uplifted, as they together say, "Our Father." For an earnest man or

woman, life without God is an unspeakable, unbearable burden.

Our Puritan and Congregational ancestors left us a magnificent heritage of truth, and above all things else they believed in God. That belief was no vague and shadowy thing. They believed in a sovereign God. They believed in Almighty God. This is the supreme article of any faith. Every other is but an inference from it and a corollary to it. It determines the length and height and breadth of a man's moral being.

The Puritans believed in Almighty God, Maker of all things, Judge of all men, before whom men were to acknowledge and bewail their manifold transgressions against his divine majesty, by which they had justly provoked the infinite wrath and indignation, to whom they repented and prayed, Have mercy upon us.

This conception of the absolute, eternal, unmovable sovereignty of the Infinite, and nothing less than this, is the ultimate and fundamental of a profound religious faith. The man is not worth his weight in dust who

does not stand in awe of God. In all history and biography, in every age and clime and nation, this has been the spirit that has hated iniquity, broken tyranny, induced righteousness, wrought liberty and made men worth making. And there never was an iniquity hated, nor a tyranny broken, nor a righteousness induced, nor a liberty wrought, nor a man worth making made without it.

Does this conception deny the fatherhood of God? No! It is essential to it. The father who does not rule his household with his wisdom, uphold it with his strong arm and guide it with his love, is no father at all.

But the super-eminent operation of the universe upon man is the *appeal* of God. The superior reaction of the soul upon the universe is its response to the infinite appeal.

To know that there is a sovereign God is not enough. The relation of the human soul to the universal order is determined by the ultimate *nature* of the Infinite.

The mind of man has spent itself in loftiest achievement in its effort to apprehend the divine nature and to think over after him the

thoughts of God. In the infinite energy that creates and eternally sustains the universe men have found the divine omnipotence and universal sovereignty. In the reason at the heart of things they have discovered the infinite, omniscient mind. But these are mere approaches and do not satisfy the *heart* of man. Beyond this outer Gentile court lies the Holy place within the temple, the universal moral order in the experience of the race. Still beyond lies the Holy of holies, the place where the individual human soul faces the eternal reality and makes its serious quest to know the moral character and heart of God. The earliest human soul began it. Through patriarch and prophet the search went on. And it ever was a measuring of God by man. There was no other way or light. Like only could answer unto like. The growing revelation was God within man responding to the God without. Men carried back themselves to God. The limitation of their view was from the fact that, with their moral virtues, they traced back to the Infinite their moral faults. It was so until Christ

came. In his holy light those who beheld with clearest vision could see through the shadows which men had cast upon God's nature, and one of them, reputed nearest Christ, saw and exclaimed, as he beheld the infinite vision, "For God is love"; and the final word was spoken.

Note the unqualifiedness of the utterance. It is not, God has love; it is not, God loves; it is not a quality shared in contrast to, or shared with, others. God *is* love. It is spoken as though he could be no more. It is spoken as though he could be nothing less or else. Men had spoken of the infinite love as a quality. Men have said, and some say now, "God is just and righteous; nay, God must be just and righteous. He may be loving." Let us not hesitate to reverse the proposition. Never mind if it denies tradition and theologic thought. Never mind though it goes beyond the conception of patriarch, prophet, psalmist, priest. Let us say, "Let God be true though every man be false."

If these have said, "God will love the good who love him; the Infinite will care for

those who worship his righteousness and admire his justice"; let us, even though we go beyond our teachers, say: "We love him because he first loved us. Before we loved him, before we did his righteous will, he first loved us, 'for God is love.'"

May we know the nature and the quality, the scope in time, and space, of the love which God is. Two other attributes of the Infinite the mind of man has determined. He is absolute and he is universal. For if in power and presence God should fail at any single point, the universe itself is insecure and may be lost at any moment. The most fatal error of the human mind is any forced limitation of the Almighty. It is a contradiction in its very terms. If, then, God is love, and if the love of God be limited by either space or time, he is no longer absolute and universal, and he is hence no longer God. The limitation of his love in time or scope is an inevitable atheism.

The sole hope of man is God. The sole hope of retaining God is in the absoluteness and the universality of the divine love. His

righteousness must be the righteousness of love. His wrath must be the holy wrath of love. His retribution must be the recompense of love. They are all determined, limited, described, if God is love, by love. If God is an eternal being, and if God is love, then the love of God is nothing less than an eternal thing. If God be universal and in communication with every human soul, then, when you bring these things together, it yields the truth that the eternal love of God extends eternally to every saint and sinner of the human race. There is no other issue, be it true that God is love. The love of the Eternal for every human soul is an eternally enduring love. Its universality in space and time means its eternal endurableness, not only alike for poor and rich, for white and black, but for every sinner as well as for every saint, for the child who is the prodigal in the far country as well as for the brother obedient in the home. The door of hope is never closed by the Father's hand. There is no other possibility if God is love.

The simplest and the best that men can do

to gain the apprehension of the eternal Father is to take the highest and the best in themselves and move it up to an infinitude in God.

In the middle ages of the Christian Church theologic thought gave men a forbidding God. That age is pictured in the Sistine Chapel in Rome, where Jesus Christ is awfully presented as the relentless judge of men. So it happened that men really turned away from God and Christ, and that was how they came to worship Mary. They took the best and the highest in themselves; they found that in motherhood. They wanted an infinite motherhood. It was denied them, by the interpreters of thought, in God and Christ, and so they turned to Mary. There was no other way, there is no other way, to find the highest good but by an infinite extension of the good in self. Man must make his God an image of the best he finds in the human heart.

> "Not mine to look where cherubim
> And seraphs may not see.
> But — nothing can be good in Him
> Which evil is in me."

How widely and how long does a mother-

love extend? Is it confined to the children that are good? Is there not love for the wandering, wayward child? But how long will such a love last? When does it fail? Go, ask the question of any mother. Say to her, "Mother, how many of your children do you love? Mother, how long do you mean to love the one that grieves your heart?"

Why, then, with the issue so simple, have men bounded the love of God by time and space? It is because both moral judgment and moral retribution raise their rightful cry. But these are evidences of a love that is true. It longs for goodness in the loved. Here again the best in the human soul may be lifted to its height in God. Our ideals of the state have risen. The punishment of crime is the opportunity for reformation, not for vengeance. So judgment and retribution are among the evidences of the eternal love. If thus the best of human love is no better than the love divine, it must be true that the heart of the eternal Father will never be satisfied until the last child comes home.

The supreme appeal of the universe to man

is the appeal of love. If love should fail, no hope is left. The human soul that was simply won by a slavish fear of retribution would not be won. There is one kind of evangelism which does not evangelize. It is that which fails to win by the ultimate appeal of love. The love of God is like a mother's holy prayer, that follows the son to the very ends of shame. It is the one thing that never dies and never can be put to death.

> "They sin who tell us love can die."
> "Its holy flame forever burneth."

It compasses the path of men. It besets them behind and before. Whither shall I go from its spirit or whither shall I flee from its presence? If I ascend up into heaven, it is there. If I make my bed in hell, it is there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there it seeks to guide and lead me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, its light shall never fail. No matter where my human soul may be, Thou, God, seest me, and with the eye of love. Our God is a consuming fire. It is the holy flame of love.

"The wrong that pains my soul below
I dare not throne above.
I know not of his hate — I know
His goodness and his love.

"I know not where his islands lift
Their fronded palms in air.
I only know I *cannot* drift
Beyond his love and care."

"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." This utterance of the supreme revealer of the Infinite involves, in equal measure, two profound, eternal truths. The one is the *divinity of Christ.* The other is the *humanity of God.*

God is the universal, absolute Reason and infinite Affection, a personal Spirit, conscious and self-directing, a being of moral perfection, who holds moral relations with mankind, who in absolute righteousness and supreme love directs the universe to a wisely foreseen and beneficent end. He is the supreme Thought, the essential Mind, the infinite Intelligence, the eternal Tenderness, who in perfect holiness and never-ending love guides the human soul to goodness.

" All's Love, yet all's Law," and all is law, yet all is love.

What is the chief end of man? It is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. No profounder question was ever asked; and no better answer ever given.

The other question is equally legitimate and commensurately deep. What is the supreme intent of God? The answer is equally as true. To glorify man and to eternally delight in him.

These two eternal verities are the speech which day unto day uttereth, and the knowledge which is shown forth from night to night.

The Place of Man in the Universe

"Who was I, that I could *withstand* God?"—*Acts 11: 17.*

THE PLACE OF MAN IN THE UNIVERSE

In his recent book entitled "Man's Place in the Universe," Alfred Russel Wallace gives to human nature a sovereign position. Amid the many systems with their myriads of heavenly bodies, in a universe infinite in time and space, the earth occupies a central position in this almost unthinkable universe. It seems to be the only inhabited or inhabitable planet in our own or in any other solar system. Among the multitude of living creatures on this earth, by an age-long process of evolution, all has culminated in man. Thus man is the superior being, not only on this earth, but in the universe of many worlds. Whether this be so or not, man is a sovereign being.

It makes little difference whether we look at it thus from the viewpoint of evolutionary science or from another point of view. If we follow the thought of Bushnell, and find the

dignity of man revealed in the ruins amid which he has fallen; if we take the order of thought in Genesis, and behold him as fallen from his God-bestowed ideal; if we behold him ideally in the person of the perfect man Jesus Christ, we shall unite in the psalmist's refrain, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained," and witness man as the superior being in this great universe, made a little lower than God, and come to the same thought,— the inherent dignity and power of humanity.

I do not propose to follow the thought of the narrator in Genesis, or of the psalmist, in detail, and consider man's power over nature, and how he harnesses the wind to do his bidding, and draws the lightning from the sky to serve his purpose. I bear witness concerning man's place in the *moral* universe.

"Who was I, that I could *withstand* God?" Peter shared the Jewish view of divine sovereignty. Everything that happened was by the direct intervention of the Infinite. Man had no power against God. This view was

right as an ideal view and in a moral universe which had attained its true being; but it is not an actual truth at the present stage, nor will it be until God's will becomes man's will.

It is possible for man to withstand God; to foil his divine attempts, to frustrate his eternal plans, to temporarily defeat his holy will. Man has and exercises a tremendous power against God.

It is generally realized that a chief fault of the theology which we have just outlived was its determinism. It did not sufficiently recognize the voluntary limitations of the Infinite. It obscured human volition and responsibility. We are all come to feel profoundly to-day, that man is the ultimate architect of his own character; the hewer of his own statue; the arbiter of his destiny. He is not mere mobile clay in the hands of the divine potter; he is morally self-determining. It is the final verdict of observation, thought and conscience, that man has, at least to a large extent, his own moral way. To him has been intrusted the power to determine whether he shall do wrong or right. While

this truth has its limitations and modifications, we, in our consciences, profoundly feel that we are responsible for our own moral volitions and actions.

The truth, however, is larger than this; man is not only self-determining, but, in a large measure, he determines and directs the universal moral order. He can, and may, withstand God, defy him and temporarily defeat his purposes and plans.

The Old Testament Scriptures give us this truth at the very beginning. It would be well if men would study these Scriptures and find such truths, rather than exhaust their powers in critical and literary discussions. Eden is the picture of God's plan. The fall was man's destruction of that Eden, representing man's power to frustrate God. The result is that the trend and hope of good is hampered by the presence of human evil, and human life has become like that of nature, a varied one of sun and clouds.

In one sense it is true that the idea of sin is sometimes overstated. Sufficient account has not always been taken of the forces of

heredity and environment. Men are becoming more cautious in their moral judgment. They are not so anxious to usurp the divine prerogative of distinguishing between their fellows. Nevertheless, while no thoughtful man will become a pessimist, neither will a serious-minded man become a careless optimist, ignoring the reality of the moral conflict between man and God.

It is a wonderful thought, the thought of this power, this moral ability which God himself has given us, to interfere, to prevent and stay the hand of God, and to obstruct the moral order of the universe.

Yet it is easy to see the truth by analogy. Let us consider man's power for evil in smaller circles than the universe or the world. Let us take one man in our thought as an example. Here is the circle of the home; it may have many members; it may have many influences for happiness and good, yet how absolutely one member of that circle can destroy the order of that home! Let us take the larger circle of social life. What awful woe one human being can bring about within that

circle, what terrible suffering! How many hearts can he break! Take, if you will, the circle of the church. How frequently one member can stay its progress, destroy its harmony and temporarily dispose of its effectiveness! The moral power of a single individual is tremendous. It is like the ripple of the stone cast upon the waters; it goes on, and on, and causes endless consequences.

So it is with this moral universe in which we live. God's plan is for the reign of goodness. On every hand man is frustrating that plan. God wants it to be a universe of love. His plan is foiled by human hatred. He desires it to be a universe of charity. Men violate his will by their miserable censoriousness. It is to be a universe of purity, but human violations sometimes make awful its defilement. Its civic life is to be one of righteousness. How the civic plans of the Eternal are destroyed! Jesus tells us that it is to be an organization of fraternity. Witness man's grinding commercial competition! It is to be a universe of truth. The plan is defied by the prevalence of human suspicion. Its society is

to be one of mutual helpfulness. Witness the rigid, miserable social distinctions of mankind!

Its ideal is that of human brotherhood under the divine fatherhood. Over against this behold the bitterness and strife of the industrial order! A world in which all men are to be free and equal. Over against this, look at St. Petersburg and Constantinople! Every man is to have the same rights. Witness some proposed solutions of the race problem. It is to be a universe of peace. Look on the underlying suspicious watchfulness of nation over nation! At any moment to-day the immediate action of just one man in this great world of men might set the nations of the world at war.

While no man of thought and vision can be a pessimist, neither can he be a self-satisfied and easy-going optimist. It is a pregnant and wonderful thought that our human sin not only affects our individual selves; not only interferes with the peace and order of some narrow human circle; but, as one small part of an intricate machine when out of order destroys the effectiveness of the whole,

so our sinful acts affect the whole moral universe, are powers and forces against God, which perpetually disarrange the plans and purposes of the infinite love and goodness.

Another thought, equally significant. In a moral sense, God is powerless in the hands of man. He can destroy man; he can send floods and earthquakes; perhaps he sometimes does, to make men thoughtful. One thing he cannot do: he cannot make men good by force. The nature of the universe forbids it.

A story is told of Principal Jowett, of Balliol College. A student came to him with the conceit that sometimes characterizes a young man, and said complacently, "Principal Jowett, as the result of my investigations I have lost my belief in God." Mr. Jowett looked him sternly in the face and said, "Young man, find it by to-morrow morning at nine o'clock, or you will leave this college." It is perhaps good as a story, but it illustrates an impossibility; man cannot be made morally good by force.

That man might have the dignity of self-

determination, God has yielded his own moral sovereignty. Men ask, "Why does the Infinite allow evil?" There are various answers. The frankest, the best, is, that God cannot help it in a universe of moral beings. If men were mere puppets they would not be moral beings, and there could be no moral order. God means to be, not a sovereign despot, but a father, even though it takes a long time to attain his holy end. To illustrate: here is your child. You cannot command him and say, "Love me." You cannot threaten him and say, "You must love your brother." No more can the heavenly Parent; but God *wants* love and goodness in the world.

While he has not invaded the sacred precincts of personality with force of arms, he gives us opportunity; he gives us incentive; he gives as one of his best gifts to us the specter of retribution that he may make us good. And we live in a hopeless world, if we do not believe in the ultimate victory of goodness, if we do not feel that in the end love will become supreme. We need also to realize, however, that every bad, unloving, untruthful

act, or thought of ours, serves to foil and defeat the eternal goodness.

We pray, and I believe that we have the right to hope, for the final sovereignty of love, despite its delay by human freedom; that some day the Infinite, who knows no sense of time, to whom a thousand years are but a day, will gain his ends. Can it be by crushing men? Can it be by eternal separation? There is, at least, with all of us the infinite hope that the victory of the infinite love will be greater than that. Most of us find it difficult to feel sure of ever winning all men. We need to guard against an easy-going satisfaction. Yet we have the right to hold it as ideal, and even to hope, that some day this moral universe will be under the control of the infinite affection; that there is "one God, one Law, one Element," and that at least there may be "one far-off divine event, to which the whole creation moves." We may be hopeful, for all God's forces are for the conquest of love.

Nevertheless, we can never lose our sense of the awfulness of human sin. We should feel

ourselves awed, moved, by the tremendous thought, that by our sins we exercise a power against God, which, for the time being, defeats and delays the sovereignty and sway of goodness, truth and love.

This is a one-sided affirmation. There is another aspect of this truth which we may witness later on, for we must try to see both sides of it. Man's place in the universe? In a large measure God has turned over his moral universe into our hands, has given us the privilege of helping him to bring his plans to pass, and with it the necessary power to deter his own eternal purposes.

Given thus a moral God, and man a moral being, and we have certain implications. The first of these deductions is the sense of moral obligation. In the light of a God perfect in character, absolute in righteousness, man beholds himself in contrast. He sees and knows himself only as he knows and feels God. The consciousness of God inevitably brings this personal sense of human sin. We can afford to dispense with original and theoretical sin. There is enough left that is actual

and undeniable. We admit that there are crimes. All else we are prone to look upon as infirmities. There is something between the two. It is sin. We do wrongs; we do them intentionally and volitionally. We repeat them. We sin; we are sinful. The sense of it is the first step to holiness. The better men become, the keener is their consciousness of it. No saint ever lived who did not feel it deeply. The complacent self-satisfaction of our generation needs humbling in the dust. The conception of sin as an offence against an outraged and righteously indignant God must not become an unknown, unheard and forgotten thing. We must relearn the preaching of it. This conception and consciousness of God, with man's self-consciousness, gives him his relation to the universe. I live under that all-seeing eye. This Infinite demands righteousness of me. He sees my evil deeds and knows my evil thoughts, and abhors them. He rightly demands confession of them and the substitution of repentance, issuing in good works. Sin is an offence against an outraged divine justice,

Does this impair the heavenly fatherhood? Will a true father encourage his children in their sin by countenancing it? Is God a seller of indulgences? The fatherhood of God calls for the forbidding of sin, and if he ignores it he is no true Father.

If thus we follow an adequate conception of God and its consciousness of sin in the light of moral obligation, we are led on by the undeviating march of law and logic to another ancient and much execrated doctrine. Cause has relation to effect. Moral acts have their inevitable consequences. Is there a judgment? It is the question of an imbecile mind. Do moral paths lead nowhere? Can men break laws without consequences? Can men break eternal laws without eternal consequences? Try it. There is yonder lofty column. There is a law called gravitation. Break it, and step airily from the summit. To break that law means death. Has the Infinite been thus exact in the physical realm of law and indifferent in the spiritual? Is the material universe a cosmos and the spiritual a chaos? The age to which we are called to

proclaim the truth needs to be told that while it blinds itself to the eternal future, the eternal laws of God move to their issues with as certain and as ceaseless and eternal march as if men saw them. They may hide their heads beneath the screen of the coverlet, but the lightning does not thereby cease to flash nor lose its pathway to its mark. They may bury their eyes in the desert sands, but they do not thus annihilate the danger. The simple and undeniable truth needs to be dwelt on, that there are two ways and trends of life — to ruin and to blessedness; that every moral decision of every moral being, that every moral act of every moral personality, brings it nearer the edge or center of a path. We are false to ourselves, and commit a crime against men, if we do not tell them they are moving, either towards the heaven of a growing life, or towards a day of remorse, by whatever name we call it.

Will there be a judgment? It is — now. Science dares to state it for us in appalling terms. It is called the survival of the fittest — correspondence to environment. Philoso-

phy calls it cause and effect. Judgment is but another way of stating the law of the survival of the morally fit, of correspondence to divine environment. The evangelist who warns men to seek the glory or to flee the wrath to come is but stating a proposition in mathematics. Two lines going in different directions will never come together. The doctrine of divine judgment is the simplest and most apparent of all truths. It is that every man is free to go as he wills, and that he will go where he goes. He is his own witness and his own judge.

Are love and fatherhood impaired? No, it is essential to them. This moral law of the survival of the fittest has for its end to produce moral fitness. It could be produced no other way. The freedom of the human will involves it. And as moral fitness could be produced by no other method, so moral fitness never will be produced by any other preaching than the solemn preaching of this truth. Would he be a father if he let his children sin against themselves? Would he be a father if he let them misuse his other

children without punishment? The true father wants his children to be good. To gain this end he must, if he be true, use every means.

God is so good and loving that he is concerned that his children should have more than enough to eat and drink. He is supremely concerned for their moral welfare. He wants them to be righteous. He has placed the barrier of retribution between them and evil that they might turn from evil. Judgment, retribution, punishment, belong among the evidences of love.

It is the tendency of men and women to evade these deep and serious issues of life, to shut out the things that make them tremble, to close their eyes to remote consequences, to live in the present and ignore the future. The age in which we live is characterized by this desire to neglect the serious consideration of human destiny.

Were this not so, men could never, as they are doing, use the opportunities created by an agitation in the ranks of labor to fill their pockets at the expense of the suffering, hun-

gering, starving and freezing poor. Were it not so, men could not recklessly use the gift of public office for the gain of private greed. Were it not so, the great mass of men and women could not forsake the duties and be indifferent to the obligations imposed by the religious sense of man.

Everywhere about us, men and women sail merrily on over the surface of an ocean deep with eternal perils. The danger of our time is the dulling and the death of conscience, the loss of the sense of Almighty God, the blindness that refuses to concern itself with the supreme and ultimate ends of human life.

It is this moral obligation, this spiritual sense, this divinely imposed responsibility and, in the ultimate analysis, only this, that makes us better than the brutes. To the extent that we realize and meet these ends, and only thus, are we above the beasts of the field. This truth, modern thought, philosophy and science make clear. Physically we are one with the lower orders of nature. In mental operations there is difference only in degree. Mentality exists in the scales of life

below us. The sole prerogative of man, which ultimately distinguishes him from his ancestors hanging to the boughs and chattering in the tree-tops, is his conscious and voluntary moral action. The difference is this: they were pushed on and upward to their end by resident forces from behind. We have been, not only thus, but also drawn by ideals revealed from above. We have a higher resident force, the impulse to attain, a higher inherent quality, the sense of responsibility for our attainment. The difference and the distinction is that eternal trusts are committed to our care.

Thus, so far as we evade eternal trusts, so far as we stifle the voice of God within, so far as we deny or ignore divine responsibility and obligation, we efface all ultimate distinction between ourselves and the lower orders of the universe, and are nothing but creatures of the dust.

Mark, then, the inevitable conclusion of the laws of philosophic thought and scientific fact. Operations of mind are not confined to man but are shared with his progenitors

about him in the woods and fields. This evolution has made clear. It is the distinguishing sense of divine responsibility that we call religion. Thus the man who declares himself not a religious man wipes out, on scientific and philosophic grounds, all final distinction between himself and — his dog.

Religion is this sense of human personal accountability to God. To deepen this and meet its eternal demands is moral and spiritual evolution. To deny it, to evade it, to lose it, is devolution now, and death hereafter. Such is the teaching, not only of Paul, of Jesus Christ, of the prophets of the Church, but the teaching of modern thought.

"I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works." The meaning of this is that human destiny is placed in life's own keeping.

Here we are in a world and universe of infinite possibilities. There are two ways and

trends of life. We have two natures. We have impulses to do wrong and to do right. We live in an environment of evil and of good. There is the double possibility of a ruined life or a glorious character. The decision is with us.

Review the varied realms of life and we see the double issue. There have been, and there are, human saints and human fiends: in the striking biographies of Scripture, a Paul and a Nero, a John the Baptist and a Herod, a Christ and a Judas. History presents a parallel record. There are Francis of Assisi and Lucretia Borgia, Thomas à Kempis and Henry VIII, Oliver Cromwell and Charles II. The pages of literature are but the reflection of history and give us Bassanio and Shylock, Portia and Macbeth. Civic spheres have held a Gladstone and a Jeffreys, a George F. Hoar and a Thomas C. Platt. Business life gives us its George Peabody in one column and its Russell Sage in another.

He is neither a student of historic annals, nor an understander and interpreter of the human life about him, who can efface the lines

between heaven and hell. If eternity restores a harmony and unity it will take a tremendous work to do it.

There are, ignore it as we may, there are both glorious and awful possibilities before a human soul, call them by the terms loss and salvation, heaven and hell, or any other terms you please. Every moral decision of every moral being, every moral act of every human life, brings it nearer the edge or the center of these paths of life, or, if you put it otherwise, lifts it to a higher level or drags it back and downwards.

We may blind our eyes, we may sleep the slumber of content, we may quell the thunder of conscience to an unheard whisper, but the powers and the solemnities of eternity are all about us. The laws of God move on. And we move on towards the heaven of a developed spiritual life, or towards a day of remorse over a wasted and a lost life, by whatever name we call it.

It was no mental imbecile, it was no shallow evangelist, it was no weak-minded gospel exhorter; it was Daniel Webster who, when

asked the greatest thought that had ever come to him, answered, "My personal accountability to God."

This is the first of our unevadible responsibilities — for our own eternal life and character and destiny.

But human accountability does not end here. It is not confined to the solitude of individual personality. I often think of it as I see the physician bending over one that is hanging between life and death. I think of it as I see the teacher in the school intrusted with the care of hundreds of human minds and hearts. I think of it as I see business men moving among their fellows; — the sense of responsibility for the lives of other men.

It comes to me with overwhelming force sometimes as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I am charged with the divine responsibility of giving to thousands of men and women their views of truth, their ideals of character, their visions of eternal realities, their inspiration to service. I have to do with their immortal lives and with the determining of their destinies. This divinely-

imposed responsibility is not limited to the leaders of men. We all touch and move and mold each other. It is both an appalling and inspiring thought.

Sometimes it is a conscious influence. We sin against a brother and incite him to sin. We utter the unkind disparagement and lead him to forsake a moral effort. We are false to a standard and he loses his faith in goodness and religion.

Much of this subtle influence is unconscious. So closely are the elements of our moral and spiritual life together bound that every expressed thought and every moral act enters into the determining, not of self alone, but of other men.

Nor does accountability end here. It extends beyond our contemporaries. It is not confined to age or generation. Its waves roll on to ages and generations to come. "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation."

Humanity carries an awful load of responsibility and obligation; as individuals, deter-

mining our own eternal destiny in view of both glorious and grave possibilities; as children of the great family of God, acting in the determination of each other's ends; as perpetuators of the race, deciding in some measure the characters of men for ages yet to come.

We are sadly blind and dull, our hearts are hardened, if it does not sometimes overwhelm us and lead us to say with the great apostle, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Who is equal to it?

The ultimate end of the gospel is the regeneration and restoration of sinful men and women. There is no other preaching that will accomplish it than that of these fundamental doctrines. The awakening in the souls of men of the consciousness of an absolute, holy God, under whose all-seeing eye they live, whose laws they cannot defy without disaster, who hates their sins, who loves them so deeply that he wants to give them the gift of his own infinite righteousness, and has put every obstacle he can, without intruding upon the inviolable solitude of their

free personality, between them and sin, — this, with the consequent consciousness of sin, is the only way by which that sense of need of redemption is awakened, by which alone redemption can be gained. These truths all stand or fall together.

The Moral Opportunity of Man

Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. — *John 20 : 21.*

THE MORAL OPPORTUNITY OF MAN

In the previous chapter we saw the human possibility to withstand God, to foil his attempts, to frustrate his plans and delay the fulfilment of the divine intention. We saw that man had the moral ability to interfere and obstruct the moral order of the universe. Man has the power to defeat and delay the moral purposes of God. We saw that this involved a larger principle; that God has largely placed the moral universe in the keeping of man. To a thoughtful man this deepens the sense of human sin as it becomes the violation of a holy trust.

This is a one-sided affirmation, and we will now turn to the reverse aspect of the thought. Let the lights pass over from humiliation and confession to prophecy and aspiration, for this placing of the moral order in the power of man involves a finer truth. Over against man's power to withstand God is also his potency to develop the divine intention, to bring to pass the purposes of God. Just as

God is powerless to stay the human will against him, so it is also true that he not only needs to have this opposition withdrawn, but that he can only bring his eternal plans to issue with human coöperation, as men become workers together with him. The question is often asked, "Why does God not bring desirable things to pass?" It is because these things are in the hands of man.

We have always seen this truth in Christ. Our confessions affirm, from the Fourth Gospel onwards, that the moral order of the world was given into the hands of Christ. This is the larger meaning of the Incarnation. One aspect of Christ's mediation long ago found its place in theology. He is the mediator of God's grace to man. One other aspect of his mediation, which is just as true, is that he is the mediator of man's divine opportunity and tasks. Christ is not alone himself to do his work in the world. He came to reveal the place of man in bringing to pass the evolution of the moral order. He is rightly emphasized as the imparter of divine grace and salvation, but he is more than this; he is the

mediator of man's responsibility. He prays, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth." He says to them, "I am the light of the world," and then turns and says again, "Ye are the light of the world." His parting word is, "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

The idea of the gospel is, that what God and Christ are to his disciples, they are to be to other men. The Incarnation is not simply a definite historic act in time; it is continuous; it is ever repeating itself, whenever there is an act of human goodness done, a deed of love performed, whenever a holy prophecy or aspiration finds fulfilment.

Behold how true this is, this truth that we take the place of God to man, that the moral and spiritual order is given over to us! Here is the child. For many, many years the mother and father are God to that child. What he learns of the divine qualities is what he sees and hears in them. How true it is of the teachers in the school, and how sadly often they forget it! This same thing is true of all the associations of human life.

To take another series of illustrations: The sympathy of God is to assuage the grief of man; but it is seldom imparted except as it comes through the touch of some human heart. The tears of sorrow are wiped away, but it must largely be by human hands.

It is thus that men learn the meaning of divine qualities. How do they learn of divine love? Through reading Bibles? To some extent, no doubt; but they learn it more from loving human hearts. How do they learn the beauty of divine sacrifice? By hearing men talk about Christ? Somewhat, no doubt; yet they learn more from the divine unselfishness and sacrifice of some mother, wife or friend. How do they gain their faith in immortality? Through the declarations of doctrines? Far more as some good and holy life passes beyond their vision and leaves behind its own undying goodness. How do they find out about Christ? From the Christologies of men? Through the confessions of their lips? Far more from the touch of Christ-like lives. Thus it is that the gates of heaven are opened by human hands. The Incarna-

tion becomes a perpetual process. Moral and spiritual life come by human impartation.

Witness, then, the two sides of our truth concerning man's place in the universe. While, on the one hand, he may interfere with the divine order, on the other hand he has the power to put into operation the infinite plan. The divine intention is thus under conflicting forces.

While this is to be a universe of love, men mingle in it both love and hatred. While it should be a universe of truth, men have brought into it both truth and falsehood. These individual personalities of ours work together both to aid and to hinder the coming of the kingdom of God. The eternal Being is not seeking to be a sovereign with force so much as he is to be a Father in love. There is no such a thing as isolated individual responsibility. Every man must bear his share of the weight of the moral order of the universe. That power is to hinder or further the coming of the kingdom.

God is operating on this world in Christ

and through his Holy Spirit; but it is as he does this through our human persons.

The immanence of God is the incarnation in man. The darkness of our human life has been dispelled by light from heaven in the souls of good and holy men and women. The message from the Father's heart has come through human lips, as the Father's love revealed itself in human lives.

As the older messages of Holy Writ have told us of their time, so in all time God has put on the personalities of men and sought to do his work of grace through them. Far better than the sense of God in hill and vale, in sun and star, and all the beauties of the world in which we live, far better than inspired written page, is the inspired heart which touches close our own in common paths of daily life, whose very garment carries healing in its touch.

Yes, God has touched life in many ways, reveals himself in varied forms — through far-off prophets and apostles, through tables of his holy law, but in a nearer way through humble men and women in our very midst.

Man's place in the universe is to bring to pass the will and the ideal of God, to bring to pass the infinite intention.

This moral opportunity of man is eternal.

> " 'Tis the divinity that stirs within us:
> 'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter
> And intimates eternity to man."

Our true faith in the heaven that is to be comes only as that heaven sheds its glow upon the life that is. Our immortality is now, a growing of the spirit-life within, the deepening of our love, the softening of our hearts with sympathy and tenderness, the sanctifying of our lives. Thus shall we put on immortality, thus shall our corruptible put on its incorruption, and thus, as Jesus by his life brought immortality to light, we must do by following in his way. Such hopes and aspirations are the foregleams of eternity. There is but one life, and we live it now.

It is not by the argument of men that we believe the life that is to come. It is when we see a good and holy life pass beyond our ken that we are lured to faith in the eternal goodness and we feel the certainty of heaven.

Thus he hath brought immortality to light, and to the eye of faith the opening vistas of man's untrodden future are invested with a sweet attractiveness and a divine glory. Man has before him an eternal opportunity.

The Person of Christ

God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance. — *Hebrews 1: 1–3.*

THE PERSON OF CHRIST

THUS far in our consideration of the grounds of theistic belief we have seen that man is by nature constituted for God; inherently a religious being; that the normal man is the man of faith. The Christian faith rests on a conception of God as the universal, absolute reason; a personal spirit, self-conscious and self-directing; a being of moral perfection, who, in perfect righteousness and supreme love, creates, governs and directs the universe to a wisely foreseen and beneficent end; the supreme thought, the essential mind, the infinite intelligence, who, in holiness and love, is guiding the human soul to goodness. We discover man to be a free moral being, self-determining and self-directing; the hewer of his own statue, the architect of his own character, the arbiter of his own destiny. We saw that he had abused his prerogatives of choice and volition and had become a sinful being.

It may be said, however, that other reli-

gions have dealt with these truths and problems in much the same way, and now we come to the distinctive element in the Christian faith, which lifts it infinitely above the religions of the ages and leaves it solitary and supreme in the moral world of thought and life. Other cults have sought to explain the mystery of sin and suffering and have taught methods of avoidance. The distinctive trait of the Christian religion is that it tells of a way of salvation from sin, of a source of infinite strength in suffering. And when the weary soul says, "Where?" or "How?" its followers begin to tell him about a man called Jesus Christ. *The center of the Christian faith is Christ the Saviour.*

Questions of Christology can be taken up understandingly only when we have first beheld the Christ of history and of experience. Let us look first at the simple picture of the three historical Gospels. It is the picture of a natural and beautiful boyhood followed by an undiminished manhood, a ministry of less than three years, his followers a little handful of humble fishermen. He dies un-

heard of by the world outside his little circle of devoted friends and followers. He is first the disciple of a moving preacher, John the Baptist, and becomes the successor of his teacher. He is developed by discipline. He is tempted as we are. He suffered just as we suffer. He needed to pray as we need to pray. In the three synoptic Gospels Jesus is a very human man.

When we have come to analyze his mind and character we are moved by its greatness. He is original in thought, profound in his intellectual grasp of moral truth. His courage is superb. He dares to mingle with despised publicans despite the disapproving nod of religious aristocracy. He stands before Pilate and Herod and the high priest in indifferent calmness. In righteous wrath he clears the desecrated temple. In the face of certain death he rebukes the expediency of his disciples, and calmly says, "I go up to Jerusalem." He is as tender and compassionate and sympathetic as a mother. He is perfect in self-sacrifice, patient and humble. In all this he is thoroughly human.

I think that in frankness it should be said that other men may have been just as original in other realms as Jesus in his. Doubtless other men have had as large an intellectual reach. Others have shown equal courage. His self-sacrifice cannot be said to be altogether unique. Other men have died for their fellows. The world may have known men of his patience and humility.

Taking Jesus as a man, then, what is his peculiar significance? Every other character upon the pages of saintly biography has been one-sided. Does it exhibit great intellectual acumen? It lacks patience or humility. Has he superb courage? He is wanting in tenderness. Is he bold? He is not humble. Is he tender and self-sacrificing? He is not courageous. Does he portray patience? He has too little force of character. Take every character you know and it will bear these marks of contrasted strength and weakness. That is why we all have our different heroes among the great and saintly souls of biography.

That which impresses us most strongly in

Jesus is his complete blending of contrasted virtues. He is as unflinching in his boldness as he is tender in his compassion. His marvelous force of moral and intellectual insight is equalled by his consummate modesty. He is almost solitary in his self-sacrifice, yet never abject or deficient in spirit. He is eager and courageous, but just as patient as he is glowing in enthusiasm. While tender, sympathetic and compassionate to sinners, he is never wanting in the fire of moral indignation. In his humility he never loses self-respect. *Jesus, the man, is the superb, the perfect ideal of manhood because of this perfect blending of all the elements within the range of character.* When we see this perfect manhood of Jesus we say, Whatever else we surrender, it must never be the real humanity of our Lord. It is an impulse and an inspiration to know that he bore this character and that he attained it as we must attain. It exalts humanity's moral ideal and tells us something of what we may become when we " see him as he is."

Having witnessed this passing picture of

Jesus as an exemplar of manhood, we pass to a doctrine concerning our Lord which the Church has ever tenaciously held equally with that of his real, unsimulated human character. This man who has been for two thousand years transforming human life is declared to be a divine being. Men's hearts have been so moved by their love and devotion for him that they have not only followed him because he is good, but have hallowed him as God. Jesus himself has uttered words concerning his nature which have been taken as the basis of this faith.

When, however, we come to examine the declarations of Jesus in their totality, we find what appear at first sight to be irreconcilable utterances. On one day he declares, "I and the Father are one"; "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." The next day, to the same hearers, with equal emphasis, he asserts, "I can of myself do nothing"; "The Father is greater than I." Our ultimate purpose will be to reconcile these apparent contradictions by indicating the sense in which Jesus asserts his oneness to God —

that is, his divinity — by showing that which constitutes his divineness. It is not to be wondered at that the Church has had its controversies over the humanity and divinity of its Lord. The problem is no greater than that which confronts us in our philosophy and psychology of ourselves. Who has ever been able to define and distinguish the human and the divine elements in man?

We have said that Christianity, in contrast to other religions, offers a way of salvation. It points men to Jesus Christ and asks them to follow him. But suppose the earnest seeker asks:

How do I know that this man, Jesus, can lead me out of my sins and make me righteous?

The teacher answers:

Because he is a divine being.

The human mind always, instinctively and justifiably, asks for evidence. Let us frankly consider the attitude of a host of thoughtful men and women toward certain types of evidence. It is an infinitely higher attitude than

that of easy-going, blind credulity. This seeker now asks:

But how do I know he is divine? Show me your evidence.

The discussion then proceeds as follows:

Teacher. — This Jesus whom we serve was miraculously born. There were supernatural occurrences in great number and variety incident to his advent. Read the preface to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke; the narratives of the nativity; the revelations to the shepherds; the experience of the wise men from the East; the heavenly visions to pious men and women. Do not these indicate the divine character of the being to whom they relate?

Seeker. — I accept the main historical part of the Gospels. But the scholars tell us that we must discriminate between the actual historicity of the main body of the Gospels and the legends which grew up around this unique man. These scholars tell us that these prefaces to these two Gospels evidently did not belong to the original narratives. They were added as a sort of introduction later on. They are highly poetical in character. In fact, they are just such legends as grew up about St. Francis of Assisi; such as have always clustered about the memory of every striking personality. Furthermore, they are contradicted by the main body of the narrative. One of the genealogies explicitly

declares Jesus to be of the line of Joseph. In fact, the earliest manuscript of the Gospels, the Sinaitic Palimpsest, recently discovered, explicitly declares that "Joseph begat Jesus." Everywhere throughout the historical parts of these Gospels Jesus is assumed to be the natural son of Joseph. Indeed, these stories bear every mark of legend; they are highly idealized, poetic. You remember that one time in the early Church a council came together to separate what they called the apocryphal stories from the authentic narratives. Well, undoubtedly, these legends ought to have been set aside with all the others which, being of like character, were discarded. The fact is, on the testimony of Christian scholarship itself, on the evidence of the Gospels themselves, I cannot accept these as historical.

Teacher. — This is only a part of the chain of evidence. Behold the miracles he performed! He cast out demons. He turned water into wine. He raised the dead. He walked on the sea. He quieted its waves and billows. Are not these unanswerable?

Seeker. — No, by no means unanswerable. I have been reading the works of your Christian scholars, the men who teach your preachers, men who give their lives and talents in consecration to the work of studying these Gospels under every advantage, and they say that there must be discrimination used here; that some of these are not well attested; in fact, that the evidence for those which

seem to transcend natural law is uncertain. Some are very late; earlier narratives know nothing of them; they are late accretions of the same nature with the other apocrypha. However, even if these be granted, the same New Testament represents other men as performing these same wonders. Therefore, if Peter and Paul did these works, they are divine, too, and we have more than one Christ. These at least do not prove any unique divinity for him who worked them. Jesus himself admitted that some of his opponents cast out devils.

Teacher. — But there is the resurrection of Jesus.

Seeker. — That is true; the evidence for *a* resurrection is there. But I find two views among your Christian scholars and theologians. Many of them regard the resurrection of Jesus as spiritual and in no sense physical. They hold that most of the accounts are more naturally interpreted on this supposition, and that those which seem to represent it as physical are exaggerations or legends. Indeed, Paul, whose letters are the earliest literature we have in the New Testament, earlier than the Gospels, and many years earlier than some of them, undoubtedly conceives of the resurrection of Jesus as a spiritual phenomenon, and of the appearances of Jesus, as like the one to himself, spiritual manifestations. This seems to me the more probable view; in fact, the only possible one. Now, if this be so, then Jesus' resurrection is the same one we await. Paul is right in grounding our resurrection in that

of his Lord. Hence, it no more proves Jesus' divinity than our resurrection hope and faith involves our divinity. I think Paul was right in his view. It is a higher spiritual conception.

And now you call my attention to the ascension story. In all probability this is a highly poetic representation and not to be taken as cold prose. It is figurative, and the truth it contains is that of the ethical and spiritual exaltation of Jesus. But, in any event whatsoever, it does not prove Jesus' divinity. The same Bible similarly pictures the ascension of Elijah and the translation of Enoch. Therefore, according to your proof, they are divine.

You ask me if I have read those Old Testament prophecies which are, in a literal and detailed and mechanical way, fulfilled in Jesus? Yes, I have read the prophecies. I have also read what modern commentators say of them, namely, that except in an ideal sense, they have no reference to Jesus whatever. We could take any one of them and apply it to other men in the same way that the editor of the first Gospel does to Jesus. At any rate, a set of coincidences like these would have no bearing on the divine nature of Jesus.

And at this point we could well imagine our remonstrant adding in conclusion:

Let me point you to some things Jesus said and to some things he did not say. He never once mentions his miraculous birth. He not only does

not appeal to it when he declares his sonship to God, but he never even mentions it. He rebuked the scribes for their literalizing of prophecy relative to the Messiah. And, marvelously enough, when asked for "signs" he peremptorily refused them and declared the generation seeking signs an "evil and adulterous" one. Evidently Jesus did not propose to rest his claims on such evidence, and I do not believe that he ever meant that you should do so. I would like to love and follow Jesus. I would like to believe him a divine being, but I cannot do it on these grounds.

Again and again have we met this man, and again and again, may I venture to say it, he has left us unanswered and unsatisfied. Such a thinking man sets us to thinking. We go home and look into our Bibles and we find things we never saw before, and we are troubled. *Now our question is: Is there an answer to such a seeking soul? Is there a response that will convince him that we love and follow a divine Master?* I profoundly believe there is, and I am going to try to give it.

Let us take our New Testaments, turn to the words of Jesus, and let him interpret his own gospel, declare concerning himself. Then let

us examine him and see what manner of being he is. Let us interpret his divinity from the words that fall from his lips, and from his personality, his mind, his consciousness, his life. Let us see just what Jesus means by his "oneness" with the Father, and in what sense he declares his subordination to the Infinite, and whether these two affirmations are consistent with each other. We may be called upon to interpret these conceptions somewhat differently from our past method. It may be that we shall be called upon to base our idea of Jesus' divine supremacy on different grounds. Let this not disturb us if they be loftier grounds. Let us not hesitate to change our point of view for a higher one. Remember that substitution, displacement, is the eternal law of progress.

In order that I may avoid misunderstanding of the purpose in view, I will make one categorical declaration, whose grounds I propose to analyze. I make it unhesitatingly and unfalteringly. It is this: *The Christian faith demands, as a final and fundamental principle of its being, that it be declared in unwaver-*

ing accents that Jesus was, in a real and vital sense, a consubstantial member of the human race. In equal emphasis with any other aspect of Christian truth Jesus must remain, in the faith of to-day, *a man* who shared man's every joy and sorrow, every conflict and temptation; who attained by discipline; who struggled and overcame, sharing every experience of our humble, human life. *Christianity must never for a moment lose from the fundamentals of its faith the doctrine of the real humanity of Jesus.*

There is one other truth which, if it fall, involves in its ruins the whole structure of the faith. Christianity is bereft of its divine sanction and authority, and thus of all real authority, if its belief, held unflinchingly through these long centuries, in the divinity of Jesus be disproved or doubted. The church that discards it ceases to be, in any vital sense, a Christian church. He who does not hold it as the center and source of his gospel ceases, at the moment of his denial or his doubt, in the highest and completest sense, to be a teacher of Christianity. *The supreme faith*

of the Church and the ministry is their certitude that their Lord and Master is a divine being.

Deny the sense of the Infinite in Christ, the presence of the eternal love, surrender the faith that his nature is the nature of God, and the race has forfeited its moral ideal; the pathway of human life toward its goal of infinite goodness is merged into desert sands, trackless and lightless; for, with the denial of the consubstantiation of the human Jesus with the infinite Deity, humanity loses the pledge of its own consubstantiation with the Father. *On these two truths hangs our whole system of belief: the human Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of man; Jesus the Christ, the Son of God.*

Our question is not, Is Jesus divine? It is rather, What do we mean when we affirm this? I feel sure that the answer to the second will involve the answer to the first. I have pointed out one line of interpretation, and have given the objections to it, which prevent many very good and earnest men and women from accepting our Lord as divine

if they must do it on those grounds. I am going to lay every one of those questions aside. It is enough to say here that these problems concerning Jesus' relation to the physical world, the manner of his physical birth, his control over nature, need not enter into our present theme. Our faith in the divineness of our Lord does not rest on these things. That is not the way to interpret his nature. It is true that Jesus taught nothing as to his metaphysical relation to God or concerning his relation to the natural laws of the physical universe. It is true that he disclaimed " signs " as evidence of his character and nature, and sternly rebuked those who sought to test them on these grounds. It is true that the correspondence of his life to prophetic details had no interest for him whatever. Hence, I propose that we adopt the method of Jesus; that we begin by a thoughtful study of his character, and by that means seek to apprehend his nature. The final test of truth is not the decrees of the Church or the elucidations of the church Fathers. We must turn from the disciples to the teacher himself. The

disciple is not greater than his Lord. Therefore, when Jesus sets aside these things as proofs of his authority, we must set them aside, whether the traditional interpretation of them be correct or not. I propose that we look, first, at what Jesus said; then at what he was and is.

When we consider the words of Jesus which refer to our problem, we find two sets of declarations, given with equal emphasis. In one he seems to claim a unique and solitary divineness; in the other he declares his human limitation, his subordination to the Father. Consider such expressions as these:

In the Sermon on the Mount he quotes an Old Testament command. He abrogates it, utterly sets it aside, with the declaration: "But *I* say unto you." He announces without any modification, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but *my* words shall not pass away." With the gesture of sovereign authority he declares sins forgiven. He intimates that somehow men are to be judged by their faith in him. "All things" are given into his hand by the Father. Likewise all

"authority." He calls men, "Come unto *me*." "One is your Master, even Christ." Seeking faith in himself, he asks, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He bids men pray in his name. He affirms, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." He delegates authority to his disciples. He associates himself with the Infinite: "My Father worketh . . . and I work." He is "the bread of life," "the light of the world." Listen to these astounding words: "I am the resurrection and the life"; "I am the way, the truth, and the life." All of these statements are but affirmations of our text: "*I and the Father are one.*"

It may be objected that these are from the Fourth Gospel, written late; from a narrative which does not altogether record actual sayings of Jesus. In answer, I candidly admit that a large proportion of the teachings of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel are put in the writer's own language; but I suppose no scholar denies that at least a large proportion of the sayings in this Gospel are *founded* on genuine *logia*. After a careful comparison

of this class of sayings in this Gospel with others in the synoptic Gospels, I am convinced that these rest in each case on a genuine *logion*. In any event, there are enough sayings of this tenor in the first three Gospels to bear out the idea that Jesus made a unique claim for himself.

A careful study of these utterances indicates that they are to be interpreted in what we may call the ethical or religious sense. Take, for instance, the phrase, "All authority hath been given unto me." He adds as a *therefore*, "Go and teach." Clearly his sovereignty is with regard to moral and spiritual things, and in no sense with relation to the physical universe. In every case he refers to the realm in which he confined his work, the realm of spiritual life. But this by no means lessens the wonder. These claims are unique. The voice sounds divine, not human, as we use the latter term. In these expressions our Lord definitely claimed divine authority.

Let us consider some of the other set of sayings. Here, again, he is just as forceful. He says, "I speak not of myself, but the Father

commandeth what I shall say and what I shall teach." He declares that he does his work by the power of God. He admits that he has no authority to appoint positions on the right hand or the left in the kingdom. It is not his prerogative. He affirms, concerning the judgment, his own ignorance. Even in speaking of God he says, "I ascend to my Father and *your* Father, to my God and *your* God." He concedes, "I can of myself do nothing." All these may be comprehended in one explicit declaration: "*My Father is greater than I.*" We need to notice one significant thing, namely, that while these sayings explicitly declare limitation, they do so in such a way as we should never think of doing. They really declare Jesus' exaltation above our concept of human prerogative as clearly as they do his subordination to Infinitude.

"*I and the Father are one.*" Yet, "*My Father is greater than I.*" Can these be reconciled? Are they consistent with each other? Does the second deny the first?

Let us see what we mean when we use the word "divinity." There are two ways in

which this term may be interpreted. We use it in both senses in reference to our concept of God. We speak of the divine as witnessed in nature. We speak of an eternal power controlling the physical universe. We see it in the lightning's flash, in the age-long revolution of the starry host of heaven, in the rising and the setting sun. It speaks to us in the whirlwind's voice, the reverberations of the thunder's roar among rock-riven hills. Here, our conception of divineness would be in the attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, in the physical world. The main concept is that of a God of power. This gives what has been called natural religion. But there is another idea of the God in the soul. We see him in control of the moral universe. Here we behold what we call the character of God. The main concept is that of a God of holy love. This gives us what we call revealed religion. One set of concepts has reference to the physical and metaphysical. The other deals with the moral, the spiritual, the psychological. What was Jesus' realm? Did he come to make a physical and meta-

physical revelation, or a moral and spiritual? Did he come to reveal the law of gravitation or the law of living? Did he come to give us science or religion? Did Jesus operate in the realm of natural or of revealed religion? Is the significance of the revelation of the Father in the Son its portrayal of the laws of physics, or is it the clear shining forth of the moral goodness of God, his character, his love?

I think this is our clue. Jesus may declare his subordination to the Father in the matter of omniscience, and yet say that he and the Father are one. Is he not dealing in spiritual terms? Does he not clearly mean, "My will is the Father's will; my character is one with God's"?

Does this not bring us back to the human Christ? Does it not make them one and the same? Yes; for they are one and the same. I propose now that we go back to the starting-point, that we begin all over again with the human Jesus. For it is the human Jesus that is divine; it is the divine Christ that is human. Let us join the Twelve and go about with him for a little while, uniting ourselves to him just

as the first disciples did. On one occasion these disciples went up into a mountain with their Teacher. There they witnessed what has been called the "Transfiguration." "He was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light. . . . A bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. . . . And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, save Jesus only."

Let us come to the mountain and look at the lineaments of the countenance of him whom we call Master. If we will but gaze at that countenance we shall behold it shining as the sun; we shall behold him clothed with a transcendent light; and we shall hear the voice saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." And we shall look up and see no man, save Jesus only. We go up to the mount with Jesus of Nazareth; we return with the transfigured Christ, the transcendent, divine Son of God. And when, a little after, he shall say unto us, "Whom say ye that I am?"

we shall answer with Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

There is a great host of earnest, Christian men and women who accept Jesus as the spiritual guide and teacher of the race, who cannot accept the faith of the Church in his unique divinity. Their attitude is illogical. There is another class who accept it without a thought as to what they mean by it. Their attitude is self-debasing. Of the men who meet the doctrine with outright denial and those who do so with blind admission, the one class is as far wrong as the other. The ultra-Unitarian says, "The fine moral character of Jesus is enough." The conservative Evangelical declares, "Acceptance of his divinity is sufficient." The answer to the Evangelical is that it is necessary to ethically apprehend this divineness if it is to become our moral ideal. The answer to the Unitarian is that character involves a nature; there is no such thing as abstract character. It inheres in a being, and that being must have a nature. The answer to both is that we come to the one by means of the other. We apprehend

the divine nature of Jesus when we comprehend his ethical character, his religious consciousness.

Lay aside all questions regarding the relation of Christ to the physical universe. We must not first settle on our theory and then say that the mind and life of Christ must conform to this theory. We must ascertain the mind and consciousness, the personality of Jesus, and then on this basis construct our theory of his nature. My purpose is to confine our thought to the spiritual realm and to show the ineffable transcendence of the divine Christ by the unclassifiableness of his character with what we call humanity. We will not say, "Christ is divine, therefore perfect." Rather we will say, "If we find him to be morally perfect, therefore he is divine."

I profoundly believe that reason finds no place for Jesus in what may be fitly termed purely human categories. These categories are the conceptions covering actual and universal human experience. The image of the Son of man is in infinite contrast with the image of the sons of men. The disciples be-

gan with Jesus, the Man of Nazareth, the human teacher; they ended with a divine Lord. Let us join the disciples and see if this shall be our experience. We will begin with an attempt to account for Jesus on purely human principles and see if these will explain him.

One of the first of these principles is that of heredity. Here it will be readily admitted that we have no cause adequate to our effect. Other principles are those of environment and training. We find nothing in the heredity, environment, or training of Jesus to account for a man who has transformed society, who abides as the central figure of the race for two thousand years and who commands its well-nigh universal love and adoration. Right at this point we touch the real miracle of the four Gospels. We need not to argue, for no one has ever sought to account for Jesus on the grounds of heredity, environment and training.

Let us pass on to consider what manner of man this is. As we do so we will mentally contrast him, at every point, with the highest

single product of the race and with the combined product of all the single characters that the pages of saintly biography have pictured.

Who has ever claimed for the hero whose character he records an unspotted childhood? Who has ever given us the picture of a completed life which has in it no process of rectification? Development there was, but it was not by the way of correction. This is just the picture we have of Jesus.

Consider his character in maturity. No one thinks of denying its moral beauty. No one affirms that Jesus was destitute of force, of that spirit which we call manly. Where else have we a character thus uniting and blending pure goodness with a supreme, unhampered, solid manhood?

Most marked of all is the contradiction to our estimate of actual human character in the religious experience of Jesus. His process is the inversion of that in other men. Can you conceive of a human religiousness that does not start with penitence? Are not the most holy and righteous, and most saintly of the saints, those who are most sorrowful

and repentant? Here is a man who never expresses a single regret. He boldly challenges, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" Let the best man you know stand forth before his fellows with any such defiance. Let any man declare his religiousness in the same breath that he denies the sentiment of repentance, without a tear of sorrow for the past, without a contrite heart, void of a single confession of wrong. If Jesus did know sin, then we have a sinful man becoming religious in the profoundest sense, yet by some other road than that of repentance. In other words, we have a religion that is not human. How profound a contradiction! On the other hand, grant his sinlessness and how could he be more divine? We have here an infinite exception to the course of human development. There could be no wider deviation.

The most significant thing in Jesus' consciousness and life is this perpetual reconciling of human contrasts. It meets us at every point. He never strikes us as gay and easy-going, nor does he impress us with austerity. Himself without sin, he betrays the deepest

sympathy with the deepest sinners. His sorrows are so profoundly joyous that they do not excite our pity. He seems thoroughly human, yet never worldly; susceptible to the compassion that sin incites, but never susceptible to sin. Compare all this with our actual humanity. Men have liberal views of the joys of life, but never without merging at some point into laxity. Are they rigid against sins? They become overscrupulous and lose liberty. Do they magnify freedom? They become negligent and lose the sense of moral obligation. I do not say that men have never *approached* consistency at some one of these points, but they have never gained it. Note how perfectly he unites what we call the passive virtues — humility, meekness, patience — with a character whose total impression is that of grandeur. He never fails or falters, whether it be in petty disturbances or in great crises. He tells his disciples that they must expect bitter persecutions, in the same breath that he declares to them his bequest of joy and peace.

Have you ever considered the vastness of

Jesus' undertaking in contrast with the means at his disposal? He stands within the circle of his little handful of fishermen and publicans and seriously proclaims that he has come to morally re-create the race. He asserts his work and influence to be timeless. Even at the very end, when the little band of followers have denied and fled, he still declares that his mission is to elevate the race to God. What man, with any such end, would have selected the means and methods of Jesus? He refuses elevation and honor. He eats with sinners. Without, for a single instant, descending, he yet associates with them. He founds a moral nation on such material as this.

Consider him as a teacher. He does not draw from the stores of learning. He simply instructs out of his own consciousness and experience. He *is* the truth he teaches. As he teaches he does not conform to human expectations, nor does he use human methods. His truth is that of intuition, yet he is never called upon to rectify a single declaration. He is as simple as he is profound, and as pro-

found as he is simple. His very supernaturalness is natural.

Looking at the character of Jesus as a whole, we come upon a striking contrast to the characters of other men the world has called great. The halo that, seen at a distance, surrounds our heroes is always more or less dispelled as we get closer to them. But with Jesus it is not so. The nearer we get to the other men who are above us, the closer we find they are bound to our common, frail humanity. It is this principle in human relations that has given rise to the familiar proverb concerning " familiarity " and " contempt." But with Jesus, the nearer we approach him the farther away he is.

What I have called attention to in these illustrations holds true at every single point in the character and life of Jesus. It reaches its height, however, when we try to analyze his mind and heart. When we make a psychological study we come upon an unaccountable consciousness in Jesus. Try to put his astonishing assertions into the minds of men. Listen to such words as these from the purest

man you ever knew: "I came forth from the Father"; "I am the light of the world," "the bread of life"; "I will draw all men unto me"; "Come unto *me*"; "Follow *me*." And yet Jesus never gives us the impression of what we term conceit. Imagine the best of men the world has known declaring "*I* and the Father are one"; "My Father is greater than *I*"; "My Father worketh hitherto, and *I* work." We must, at this point, either dethrone Jesus as a pretender, set him aside as an insane enthusiast, or else admit his divine consciousness. This self-consciousness of Jesus must either determine his worthlessness or his supreme worth. He is either less than our humanity or more. If a mere assumption, he has succeeded, for two thousand years, in maintaining this stupendous pretension. The fact is, whatever holds true in all our experience in other men, is reversed in him.

We worry about the miracles. *Why, it is all miracle.* You ask at what point the uniqueness of Jesus comes in? *It is all unique.* In what is he transcendent? *He is altogether transcendent.*

Men have been going up and down, allying themselves with a sinful and adulterous generation, joining the questioning scribes and Pharisees, saying, "Show us a sign, give us a miracle, that we may believe in thee." They have been asking for some little spark of light to shine out of some remote corner of the heavens. And behold, the glorious sunlight has been streaming into their faces for two thousand years and they have refused to see it. They have been trying to find some one point which would indicate the transcendence of Jesus, while all the time *he is altogether transcendent.*

What is the difference between Jesus the Christ, and our actual humanity? It is the infinite difference between perfection and imperfection — the eternal contrast between sinlessness and sin. Can anything be diviner than that which is morally and spiritually perfect? What is the explanation of this great moral miracle? There is only one. God was with him in full measure. He was altogether led, inspired, upheld, by the Infinite. What is this that we behold in him? It is the revelation of the Father. The apostle has ex-

plained it: "God was *in* Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." It is because he and the Father are one. He who sees him sees the Father. *We believe that Jesus the Christ is divine, because we see in his character a manifestation of the character of God; in his perfection, the divine life.* As we gaze at his countenance he is transfigured before us; his face shines as the sun; his garments are clothed with light. The bright cloud of a divine glory overshadows us, and we hear a voice saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." *We behold the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* Thus are we led back by the inevitable processes of thought to the divine nature of Jesus Christ.

This careful consideration of the character of the historical Jesus indicates at every point his transcendence above our realized humanity taken at its highest and best. The great miracle which we considered is not only one that took place two thousand years ago. It has been perpetually followed and continuously verified during these twenty centuries.

The perennial transforming power of the person and teaching of the Christ of to-day bears witness to the divine character and nature of the Redeemer of the race. Signs and wonders are given before our very eyes — miracles, which, not in the physical but in the moral and spiritual realm, are the higher and more significant just because they are operative in this higher sphere.

The supreme difference between Jesus and what we call humanity is an infinite ethical difference. There may be other distinctions, but *only that which is ethical has the highest worth and meaning.* If character itself is transcendent and has its springs in the heart of infinite goodness, then a character which is ethically perfect becomes supremely and solitarily surpassing.

Goodness is the supreme and significant element in divineness. *Jesus' highest evidence of sonship to God is that he bears God's likeness, possesses the Spirit of the Holy, manifests his love, partakes of his will and goodness.* There may be other evidences, but I confess I care little about them. It is a miserable

waste of time to quarrel over them. The immortal legacies of Jesus to the race are these: (1) He gave us our loftiest conception of the will and character of God: God is the Father of the race; (2) he revealed that will and character in himself: he that hath seen him hath seen the Father. The divinity of Jesus is the divinity of this perfect righteousness, of supreme love, of transcendent moral purity, of holy virtue. He has left us the sound of a divine voice, the reproduction of a divine life.

Is the difference between Jesus and man, then, a difference of kind or of degree? This is mere juggling with words. There cannot be two kinds of goodness. The goodness of man, if there is any such thing, must be the same in kind as the goodness in God. If we talk about two kinds of goodness we become polytheists. If there be two kinds of divinity, there must be two divinities, and God is not the one, only, all-comprehending, sole-directing power of the universe. *There are, however, differences in degree which practically become differences in kind.* Evolution

reveals all differences of kind as the resultants of the accumulation of differences in degree. Suppose we consider the difference between man and brute to be a difference of kind. Suppose we consider that between good men and bad to be one of degree. The difference between the best and worst of men is certainly greater than that between the worst of men and the best of brutes. Thus does our difference in degree become a greater difference than a difference in kind. The divineness of Jesus is that of a complete, perfected, ideal goodness, which infinitely excels and eternally exceeds our actual humanity.

Let us now see the significance of this oneness with man and this oneness with God, revealed in Jesus, as it relates to man and his moral ideal and goal. Jesus is the pledge and the interpretation of the truth; "now are we children of God." He is the pledge of the consubstantiality of humanity with God; the interpreter of the substantial kinship of God with his children. Thus it is that we believe in God through Jesus Christ.

Thus have we "one mediator also between God and man, himself man, Christ Jesus." In nothing is declared more explicitly the identity in nature of humanity's childhood with the divine fatherhood than in that lofty ideal set forth by Jesus: "Ye, therefore, shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." There can never be attainableness without essential unity between that which is, and that which is to be. Upon this faith in the presence of the divine life in the human soul rests our sole hope of an immortal life.

Humanity is lost if it be not that the character of Jesus is imitable and reproducible in his followers; if Christ be a mere portrait to gaze upon, and not a model to follow. The moral life of God in Christ is the moral life for man, or he has none. The example of Jesus is the standard for his brethren. Remove this as an ethical ideal and we are absolved from all moral obligation. The life of Jesus Christ is the life for man. The will of Jesus is the will for man. The spirit of Jesus is the spirit to be nurtured in his true followers. The character of Jesus is the goal of his

disciples. That which he is they are to become.

If this moral ideal is perfect it can be nothing less than that which inheres in God. If Jesus is this perfect moral ideal he is divine. We are sons of God. He is *the* Son of God. He is actually what man is prophetically. In him we behold affinity with the Father. This is the pledge and the interpretation of the essential kinship of the children of God on earth with their Father who is in heaven. If the moral life of Jesus has its source in the Infinite, and if the moral life of Jesus is the moral life for man, then it is only as conscious sonship with God is elicited in us that we can ever be hopeful of attaining unto the life which he himself has declared we must strive to gain. If the moral character of Christ is the moral character to be sought by his followers, that of his followers must have as its source the same source that his life has. His prayer is that as he is one with the Father, so his own may become one with the Father and with him. This is the lofty ideal and the hope of its attainment as taught by Jesus.

Here, then, is the meaning of those two attitudes of faith to which the Church has unflinchingly held, — the humanity of Jesus and his divine nature. The consubstantiation of the divine Jesus with man reveals the consubstantiation of humanity with God. He is the revelation of the essential oneness of the human and the divine. The principle of identity and difference which prevails throughout the universe, both moral and physical, is here exemplified. Reason is one and the same in God, the absolute, and man, the limited reason. And yet the mind of God is not the same as the mind of man. God is immanent, and at the same time transcendent. Jesus is immanent in our humanity. He is transcendent at the same time. *The actual contrast of Jesus and humanity is the actual contrast between humanity and God. The essential kinship of Jesus with humanity is the revelation of the essential kinship of humanity and God.* If we lose the idea that the Christ is of the nature of God, we lose our pledge of the essential relation between the human and its divine ideal. Then our moral ideal is

gone as a possible attainment. Gone as a possible attainment, it is as worthless as the cup of Tantalus. We are in the midst of an infinite ocean of which we may never drink.

We have seen that the contrast between Jesus and humanity is made on the very grounds of his human nature. Admit (and who in the face of Scripture and consciousness will deny it?) that there is a divine nature in humanity. Admit that we have perfection in Jesus, and you admit the divine transcendence of Jesus. If moral character is good, if the good is divine, with its source in the heart of God, then perfection of character means the realization of a divine perfection, and we have a divine Christ, with his very being grounded in the Godhead, solitary and supreme.

The question arises at this point: Does this mean that mankind will ever realize the perfection that is in Christ? With the apostle we must say, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." It looks as though incompleteness would be our state through all time; for is it not a truth in our study of self-develop-

ment that the nearer we approach the goal the farther it recedes? Are we, then, infinite, viewed in the light of our possibilities? This I feel we can neither assert nor deny. Certain it is that every step in advance renders the next step more possible.

And yet each advancing step only seems to open our eyes more clearly to the immeasurable distance between us and our hopes. The more we know of God, — that is, the more Godlike we become, — the farther does the divine ideal recede. Is not this pursuit of a flying goal, a goal which seems to fly faster than its pursuers, dismaying? No; for at the same time that we realize its growing unattainableness, we realize that we are attaining. While it does not give us a detachable end which may some day cease to be an end, it does give us a mode of life and an incentive to moral development. The question, What shall we be? leads us to an unfathomable mystery. In kind we are to become like Christ. In degree? We have no answer. But we may rejoice that the shadows of the things that be are eternally pierced

by the infinite sunlight of the things that are to be.

Let us now review our thought so far. We have seen that what might seem to put Jesus on the level of the race, namely, that he is the perfect moral ideal revealed in humanity for humanity, is the real indication of his infinite differentiation from the race.

We have seen that the divinity of our Lord does not rest upon one or two mysterious signs, but that he is altogether one great standing moral miracle. If his character is divine, his nature must be determined by his character. Be his nature divine, he is a divine being.

We have asserted with equal emphasis his real humanity and his divine character; that this unity is the revelation and the interpretation of the oneness of humanity and God; that this unique and perfect sonship of Jesus with the Father is the ground of the imperfect but prophetic sonship of the children of men.

"Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of

the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." — *Paul.*

"Now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is." — *John.*

The ground of the one disciple's lofty ideal and hope is in the truth of the confident affirmation of his fellow apostle.

> "I say the acknowledgment of God in Christ,
> Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
> All questions in the earth and out of it."

The supreme and sovereign personage of history is Jesus Christ. To grasp the magnitude of Jesus' person is the divinest task of human thought. For the intelligence of men he is the source of an exhaustless contemplation. The loftiest of human minds are reverent in his immeasurable presence and with the wise men of the East can offer but their homage, and at his feet cast their slight morsels of frankincense and myrrh and offer at his shrine the incense of their genius. This supreme Mind, whose words of holy wisdom have transformed our thought and

life, knows no intellectual companions. Between him and the intellects of loftiest reach there is a great gulf fixed. His greatness, unencompassed by the mind of man, calls for the heart. For the interpretation of his ineffable, transcendent person only the clearness of a pure heart suffices. The attitude of men to Jesus is the final and determining computer of their length and height and breadth of vision and of life.

The fact of his eternal presence, his healing of the sick of heart, his raising of men's dead and dying spirits, the translation into life of the utterance of his lips, have been the only glories of the race since his appearing. The story of the fleeing shadows in the heart of man and the world's larger life have been but the fulfilment of his own announcement that he was come to be the light of men and of the world. Every advancement of the human mind in the interpretation and the deepening in conception of man's moral life is but the fulfilment of this vision of himself to his own soul, every growing love of man for man its realization. The sacrifice and service

of our life, which are its finest beauties, are but the adumbrations of his light and testify to the preëminence of Calvary.

He performed the loftiest mental achievement of the race. His ideal of a kingdom of heaven upon the earth, his conception of the fatherhood of God, his apprehension of a universal brotherhood of men, his interpretation of eternal human life, reached a moral and spiritual height which absolutely knows no end. All our upliftings of the moral ideal, of our discoveries of goodness, are but the mind of Christ translated to the minds of men.

To recover his unutterable vision is the loftiest aim of human mind and heart. To see his God, to grasp his interpretation of our own souls, is the supreme achievement set before the race. His consciousness, so far as gained, is its superlative possession. To know Jesus Christ would be to reach the height and depth of spiritual knowledge.

God is the first and last, the beginning and the end, of all his works. In him, humanity, the best of his creations, finds its meaning and its end. The Infinite has ever been with

men, but in completeness, only once, in Jesus Christ. And ever since the angel annunciated to the mother, "The Lord is with thee, . . . the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee," Jesus has meant this to man. The incarnation was this pledge of the divine above, and with our human life, the revelation of the heaven that lies about us in our infancy and constantly follows all our days.

God with us! — a human form which was the perfect garment of the eternal Spirit. The meaning of it all is this: that Jesus had the mind and heart of God and brings before the race as its supreme attainment the gaining of that mind and heart.

The person, then, of Jesus calls for the homage of the race. He is an eternal contrast to the human life to which he came and comes. The difference between his sinlessness and human sin is an eternal moral contrast. Against the somber background of our darkened human lives the perfection of his spirit is as the sun at night. His exhaustless person calls for a supereminent, unique distinction.

His eternal contrast between sinlessness and sin is the eternal contrast between God and man, and when men bow the knee to Jesus Christ they worship and adore the God whom he ineffably reveals.

And the reverent man who seeks, as men will seek, and ought to seek, an adequate interpretation of Jesus to the intellect — be at the same time his heart and motive pure — will find himself lifted beyond the humanity in which he stands, will find himself upon the height of Tabor, gazing at a countenance transfigured before him, at a face which shines as the sun, at garments white as the light; while the cloud of a divine glory overshadows him, and in his ears resounds the voice, "This is my beloved Son: hear ye him." The God of Jesus is the highest reach of human thought. The Jesus of God knows nothing higher, and he that hath seen him hath seen the Father.

The solitary perfect moral human light of these two thousand years is clouded with ambiguous shadows, the nature of the Infinite unknown, the faith of men and all their moral

life uncertain, the goal of their achievement is unsure and the whole present scheme of human progress fails, unless, with an authority that is divine, with an ideal that is the form of God, Jesus Christ is God with us.

But the vision and the revelation have not here their final end for human life. The Son of God is likewise Son of man. The unity of Christ with men must be as clear as the distinction. There is in Jesus a deeper element, a deeper meaning for the race, than the apprehension of the Lord's divine identity. He must become revealer of the God within our human life and selves; his mission to restore the broken image and the heavenly superscription on the race.

The relation of the eternal Son with the eternal Father is the ultimate ideal relation between men and God — the actual in Jesus, the prophetical in man. Without the immanence of Christ his heavenly transcendence can have no vital meaning for the sons of men. And as his actual contrast between himself and men is the eternal ground of faith, so must his essential kinship with the

race be its eternal ground of hope. And if we bring these truths together, we shall have a Christ who is the very substance of the Father, with his being grounded in the Godhead, solitary and supreme. And we shall have a human Christ, the supreme human soul, who lives among and moves upon the heart and life of men, lifting the race to his own vision of its divine ideal and to a consciousness of its own inseparable life in God. The incarnation was in man then, that it might be in men. In Jesus, God became partaker in the life of men that men might be partakers in the very life of God.

The human life of Jesus was the life of God in man, and the eternal life of men can be none other. Thus hath he brought our human immortality to light.

This, then, becomes the deeper meaning of the advent; the witness of divinity within our humble, human lives, touched by the divine without in Christ, to bring it to fulfilment. It is the pledge and the interpretation of God's eternal life within his children. The transcendence of the Master, by his imma-

nence, becomes the pledge of the transcendence of our present selves.

No loftier view of Christ can human mind conceive. No larger meaning in him for the race could be invented. To apprehend the moral magnitude and contemplate the spiritual force of Jesus is the solitarily supreme desire of the mind of man, and to appropriate his life the loftiest endeavor of a human soul. In him the Infinite is reachable to human contemplation. He is God with us. Through him attainable to human aspiration, he is God within us. The Son of God, the witness, and the earnest of the heavenly childhood of the race, he is the sovereign possession of mankind.

Jesus, thus, in himself gave the answer to man's quest for the Eternal; "God is love." This was the revelation that Jesus brought to the vision of men. We affirm the God-likeness of Christ. We must make the equal affirmation of the Christlikeness of God. Nineteen hundred years ago there occurred the supremely significant scene of history. It was the crucifixion of the Son of God.

Every upward movement of the race, and all its finer life, have come simply as fast as those who followed Jesus have walked up the ascent of Calvary. Thus, the cross has been the emblem of man's finest hopes.

What is its final meaning? Is it a satisfaction of the Divine wrath? There is an adjustment in the collocation of thought by which it may be put that way with logical sequence. Does it satisfy God's vengeance? Yes, just as you would satisfy your vengeance against the heathen by sending your son or daughter to a mission field. Was it a revelation of the awfulness of human sin? Yes, not only as a defiance of the Divine sovereignty, but also as trampling upon the Divine love. Its supreme significance was its revelation of the appeal of the infinite affection. That which is hard for the mind is often simple for the heart. If you want to know the nature and the character of God, go, look at Jesus Christ.

By sin man may crucify, and crucify again, the divine affection, but on the third day it will rise to be crucified again.

"God, in the being of his Son, makes his eternal counsels known:
Where love in all its glory shines, and truth is drawn in fairest lines."

The Sovereignty of Christ

But I say unto you. — *Matthew 5: 28.*

While he was yet speaking . . . behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son . . . hear ye him. — *Matthew 17: 5.*

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF CHRIST

THE comprehensive note of the gospel is that of absolute, final, sovereign authority. It is the constant impression of the utterances of Jesus. It is the eternal suggestion of his mysterious personality.

We have seen that religious thought concerning Jesus has wandered far afield in its emphasis upon such questions as those relating to miracles. The supreme power of our highest Christian thought is associated with the moral and spiritual nature of Christ. The Christian faith is not a set of philosophic ideas. It is the power of a person. To the disciples he said, " Follow Me," and they followed him. They did not know why they followed him. He did not silence disputation by counter-disputation. He did it by the solemn affirmation of himself. In the Garden they fell back, and at Calvary they trembled before his sovereign person. It is true that Jesus uttered striking truth. He rebuked; he

warned; he besought; he instructed. But as one enters into the heart of the Gospels the most impressive thing is an impression, mysterious, solemn, compelling, the impress of a solitary, sovereign personality. In the highest sense it is this that is the finer element in discipleship to Christ to-day. We really do not believe in Jesus because of his gospel, so much as we believe in his gospel because of Jesus.

There are two schools of thought to-day, the school of Ritschl and the school of Calvin. In the displacement of the latter by the former the idea of the sovereignty of Christ has assumed a larger place than that of the sovereignty of God because the Mediator is closer to us than that which he reveals to us. The sovereignty of God and the supremacy of Christ have become one and inseparable, co-equal and eternal, now and for ever. The mind of man has spent itself in loftiest endeavor in its effort to comprehend the Infinite. It has proved an unending quest. The same thing is true of the person of Jesus. It is as mysterious, as solemn, as

infinite, as the being of the eternal God. Just as theology has succeeded theology, so Christology has followed upon Christology. In each, man has ever been seeing, learning more but never exhausting. It is the quest of a receding goal. The more we learn of Christ the deeper, the profounder, the more mysterious and transcendent he becomes; and the Christlikeness of God is as real and as illuminating a conception as the Godlikeness of Christ. For the intellectual and spiritual vision of mankind, the magnitude of Jesus' person is the object of an exhaustless contemplation. Just as that personal compulsion led those earlier disciples and transformed them, so it is that the story of the fleeing shadows in the world of human life now for two thousand years has been but the fulfilment of his own prophecy that he was come to be the Light of the World. As his form has become clearer, the world has become better. The spiritual consciousness of Christ is the eternally enduring object of the minds and hearts of men. Thus, in him was introduced into the world not merely a new deca-

logue, not only a restored prophetism, but an absolutely new order of life. I utter it with the confidence of absolute certainty; the better moral, spiritual order of the world, so far as it is better, is simply the light of Calvary on human life. Any better life, any finer vision, to be realized in any sphere or time within the moral order, will come, and can come, only by the yielding of the hearts of men, and of the constitutions of human institutions, to the sovereignty of Christ.

"But I say unto you." His word has never been transcended. The true apprehension of Jesus is not in the utterances of the Sermon on the Mount, but in the mysterious scene upon the mountain of transfiguration. "This is my Son . . . hear ye him." It is the eternal voice from heaven to the race to-day. The vision and the voice must both be seen and heard. This is the order of Christian evidence; he who spiritually apprehends the person will be mysteriously, solemnly commanded by the utterance. The order of experience will be both the mount of vision and the Sermon on the Mount. To

those who see the vision, the voice will be the sovereign compulsion of human thought and life. This is the world's deepest need to-day and the sole solution of its profoundest problems. To serious, thoughtful men its problems are serious and sometimes dreadful. Without the help of God an earnest-minded man would not be able to bear the weight of his own heavy heart. Without the light of Christ the shadows of human life would be impenetrable.

First of all, the sovereign voice of Jesus is the ultimate authority for Christian thought and faith. Here we find much disorder, unrest and doubt. Men are in question concerning the reality and the nature of God; the being of man; the reality of sin; the certainty of judgment; and the determinations of destiny. Where shall they turn for the ultimate word? To the Council of Nicæa? To the utterances of Chalcedon, or Trent? To whom shall they turn? To the remnant of John Calvin's thought, or to Arminius? To the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church who have recently seen fit

to form a final judgment? I dare say, No. The supreme personal, individual authority is Christ.

At the marriage feast in Cana, Mary simply and confidently turned to the men and said, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." So we may say: "Whatever he says to you, think it, accept it." This is the first element in the order of Christian discipleship. Learn the thought of Christ and try to live by the guidance of that thought. There is no other name given under heaven or among men whereby the world of thought can be saved from its doubts, denials and distresses. By submission to Christ the world of Christian thought will emerge from the shadows. While the wise men of the East were offering their myrrh and the incense of their genius at the infant shrine, the unwise men, as they tended their flocks upon the plain, were also hearing the heavenly hosts. So the simplest minds and the profoundest intellects may sit together at the feet of Christ. "But I say unto you"; "Hear ye him." Our theology, our Christian faith, must be determined by the sovereign thought of Christ.

The situation is more appalling when we consider the solemn, serious problems of the social order. Christ is interested in the way that men treat each other. It may seem preposterous, but I am willing to affirm it; we have a solution of the deep, dark problems of rich and poor, cultured and uncultured, good and bad; of the questions of heredity, environment and opportunity. Over all this tumult a voice may be heard, "But I say unto you"; and another voice echoing from the other mountain, "Hear ye him."

And what does he say? Let us gather this human society upon the mountainside before him, first the one side and then the other, for there would be two sides. He speaks: "Blessed are the humble"; "Blessed are the merciful"; "Blessed are the peacemakers." Over against the selfishness of men, over against the law of the survival of the fittest, he puts his "I say unto you"; "Love your enemies"; "Forgive men"; "Judge them not"; "One is your Master, and all ye are brethren"; "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you"; "He that saveth his life shall

lose it; and he that loseth his life shall save it"; "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." And after the sermon he lifts his hands above them, and he says, "Kneel down together side by side, touching one another in common sympathy and common needs; now say, and say it all together, 'Our Father.'" After the gathering he goes out to dine. A poor fallen creature comes and sheds her tears at his feet. Simon has forgotten the sermon and the prayer, until the Master rises, looks him in the face, and says, "Simon, she is a poor, low creature, but she is also your sister. She has lost the beauty of virtue, but she lost it living in that one-room tenement of yours." This is the imperative word of Jesus to society, absorbed in its corrupt pleasures and selfish isolations. Jesus Christ is the socialist, his gospel is the socialism for our day.

Who does not look in fear and trembling upon the world of industry and the commercial order? Jesus is interested in these problems whether his Church is or not. I mean the questions of wages, of hours, of the servi-

tude of women and children, of the conditions of dividends and profits. His clear eye traces much resulting iniquity back to the degrading conditions of labor. He is supremely concerned with the ethics of business. He sees with a pierced heart these two great armies encamped over against each other in their mutual bitterness and hate. To the one he says, "Your labor is a divine opportunity." To the other he says, "The control of men is a holy trust." This is his answer to the men of business who tell us that these are business questions for business men and not religious questions for the pulpit.

Again Jesus calls them also together upon the mountainside, that when he is set they may gather before him. He calls them from the labor union; he calls them from the organizations of their employers. Over against the rule of gold he puts the Golden Rule. He tells the Christian business man that he cannot serve God and mammon. "But I say unto you, Love one another even as I have loved you." Your business is not simply to buy in the cheapest and sell in the highest market.

Your aim in life is not simply to work the least you can for the most you can get. So He calls them together and tells them to kneel down, closely touching one another, to lift their eyes to heaven and say together with him, "Our Father." He passes out from this scene. He meets the pharisaical men of human privileges who have not attended the gathering. He points his finger at them and says, "Ye bind heavy burdens upon men, and will not so much as touch one of them with your fingers." The sovereign Christ is the final arbiter of the industrial order.

Jesus' most significant method we have yet to see. While his words relate thus to bodies of men who have come together under the natural associations of human interests, his words are always spoken directly to the individual. He realizes that both the social and the industrial order are made up of men and women. So he went about to men and women. He said most of his profoundest words to but twelve men. Yet witness the realization of his prophecy, fulfilling itself

for now twenty centuries, that they should be the salt and leaven of the earth.

The supreme question of human life is that of the personal relation of the individual to Christ. Who, in these two thousand years, have done the most to bring men to his feet? The framers of the creeds? They have done much, and yet, "Their little systems" had "their day; they" had "their day and ceased to be." The theorists of social reform? They have done much, but it has been fragmentary and transient. In the industrial order, the organizations of labor? No doubt they have accomplished a great deal for the uplifting of men.

But more, infinitely more, has come from the perennial power of simple personalities who have been constantly shedding Christ's spirit about them. Jesus saw these same dreadful problems. They were worse in his day. He met them by sending out twelve disciples. He is meeting them to-day in the same way. The sole hope of the world is to make men disciples of Jesus. He is waiting, as his parents waited in the inn, to find room

in the social and industrial realms of life. He finds room as men get him in their hearts.

I said these things one day in conversation in the office of a great business man. After I had done, he smiled benignly and said, "My young brother, your ideals are fine, but there is no place for them in business." Christ is waiting to find room in that man's business, and he will find it when he finds it in that man's heart. The New Jerusalem of a better human order must descend out of heaven. If we look for a city that hath foundations, its builder and maker is God, its ruler is Christ. The Infinite is the author and the creator, and he must be the finisher of the moral order. Jesus Christ, his Son, is the master workman on this earth.

The solution of all human problems is the answer of religion. There is no religion known to man higher than our Christian faith. The solemn questions of society, the serious conditions of industry, with its bitterness and hate, simply await the second coming of the Son of man through his disciples. The world to-day is full of Bethesda pools and of men

waiting for a Christ in the form of a disciple to help them in. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until men shall see the vision of Mount Hermon and hear the voice of the Sermon on the Mount.

"O Saul! it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a man like to me
Thou shalt love and be loved by forever.
A Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee,
See the Christ stand!"

There is no other name, no other name, given under heaven or among men whereby the world can be saved. And the sovereignty of Jesus Christ is the simple reign of human love. "But I say unto you"; "While he was yet speaking . . . behold, a voice out of the cloud" said, "This is my beloved Son . . . hear ye him."

The Spirit of God

Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. — *John 16: 7.*

But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit . . . shall teach you all things. — *John 14: 26.*

THE SPIRIT OF GOD

In relation to our conception of the revelation of the Infinite in the order of nature the two great discoveries in modern science are: the extension of the universe in space, and its extension in time. Coincident with these is our resultant discovery of the law of continuous progression.

Likewise, in our comprehension of the revelation of the Infinite in the moral and spiritual order, the revealment of moral and spiritual truth, and the molding of human life by divine ideals, the field of spiritual vision is wonderfully enlarged by these discoveries. Thus science has been the handmaid and the servant of religion.

The question of divine revelation is a much larger one than it would have been considered a century, a half century, or even a quarter of a century ago. To define the contents of revelation is a much more difficult task than the religious teachers of the ages

have conceived it to be. We are dealing with the revelation of an infinite being, with an infinitude of time and space before him and with an infinite love which will eternally constrain him to seek to fill that time and space with his own goodness. Our attempt to define the contents of the revelation, from one point of view, is thus to define the indefinable, to state the limits of the boundless.

On the side of man, however, there are limitations to his vision of this revelation, and thus, for him, it is contained, and may, in a measure, be defined. Yet, even then, the history of the race, now extended, by the divine discoveries of science, far back into the ages in time, and far out beyond the bounds of any race of people in space, gives us a large and glorious area and makes us cautious in our efforts to determine and define upon the side of man.

The tendency of modern thought is to find the Infinite, as inspiration and spiritual force, in every place where the heart of man beats, and to recognize that the revelation is defined only by the limits of human ability

or willingness to witness the vision, and that it is determined only by the stage of human moral progress. In stating the human forms which contain the revelation, we must aim to give the widest content and to cover the most we can. And we feel, after our attempt to thus define without omission, that we have not exhausted by our definition, and that we have been attempting, after all, to discover the limits of the illimitable.

It has been this feeling that has brought about the transition in our emphasis from doctrines of Biblical inspiration, of the incarnation in a solitary person and the religious ownership of a single institution, to the larger doctrine of the Holy Spirit, whose work includes all these and is not bound by any one or all of them.

These discoveries of an infinite moral universe, knowing neither space nor time, have brought us to this larger doctrine of the Spirit. Thus it is that science has helped us to larger and better things in faith, and we have made the further great discovery that there is no contradiction between the two.

It may be said that we should avoid negations and only give the direct and positive assertions for which the human heart awaits the utterance of the prophet. But I am writing for the discriminating and discerning, and to such the affirmation is often best revealed by the negation of its opposite, through their knowledge of the inevitable law of contrast.

If the infinite revelation is bounded by neither time nor space, then it is only limited on the part of man, as a whole, by the limits of extent to which he fills, has filled and will fill time and space. This being true, it is certain, to begin with, that religious revelation cannot be confined to a book or to any collection of books, that does not at least include every utterance of the human heart on the remotest moral theme. For such a book, or such a collection of books, is limited by a space and time that are less than those which have been occupied by the collective life of man. This is not to say, however, be it noted, that a book is not a revelation. It is at best, however, but a single illustration,

or an epitome, of the larger revelation ever going on in the larger time and space outside its limit, a revelation which thus began before the Book, which went on in larger measure while the Book was being written, and which continued after the Book was closed. Revelation thus cannot be limited to the Book we call the Bible, even though it were an errorless book.

To proceed further, our thought has passed beyond that doctrine of the incarnation which confines the revelation to a single person, or to persons, until we have included every human soul. It is true, I think, that Christ alone of all human beings beheld the sum total of the moral perfection of the Infinite, and certainly no other whom we know has ever perfectly embodied it.

But again, we have here, at most, but an illustration, or an epitome, of the larger incarnation which has touched every human soul that ever lived. The difference is in degree and not in kind, except in so far as a difference in degree may become a difference in kind. Our vision of the Christ is the picture in min-

iature of the larger incarnation. The historic Jesus was filled with God's holy spirit, but he did not exhaust it, and he himself declared that it was God's universal gift to all his children. Of this we shall treat more fully a little later on.

Still further, if this revelation is bounded by neither space nor time, it could in no way be confined to any institution, whether it be the Church of Israel, the Apostolic Council or the Church of Christ. All these, again, are but epitomes or single illustrations of the larger revelation which went on before them, which was contemporaneous with them and of which they were but a part, even though it were the larger part.

Thus we can no longer confine inspiration to the Bible, the incarnation to Christ or religion to a church.

It must be frankly admitted, also, that the clear distinctions which once existed, or were thought to exist, between a natural and a supernatural revelation have passed away.

As we have seen, it has been our discoveries of the truths of the natural order that have

led us to the larger truths of the moral and spiritual order. And so, as evidences of a moral revelation, the so-called miracles have gone. The believers of our day who believe in the miracles of Jesus believe in them because of him and his gospel. They do not believe in him and his gospel because of miracles. A contradiction, or a marvel in the natural order, is no more proof or evidence of moral principle than an athlete's ability to lift a hitherto unlifted stone is proof that he is a holy man.

The newer doctrine of the Holy Spirit witnesses the supernatural in all moral action and operation, and, so far as the evidences of a moral and spiritual revelation are concerned, miracles in the physical order are, with those who still feel under obligation to attempt to retain a place for them, a sort of extra ornament, of somewhat doubtful value even as such, and belief in them is at best a work of supererogation. We shall come, with Jesus, to consider those who have the larger light of spiritual truth, and before whose faces Jesus shines; and who still insist

on seeking signs, as an adulterous and evil generation.

I have stated these things in the form of negation because it is necessary, as Christ declared, to destroy the older temple that we may erect a new and better one on its foundations. It is expedient that these go away.

It must be admitted that, again and again, age after age, men have been possessed with the idea that at last they had gotten divine truth enclosed and finally contained. We feel to-day, however, that this cannot be possible until all things are possible to man as well as God. The fault has been that one or two, or a very few, of the methods which were designed to lead men to faith have themselves become the objects of faith, the means became the end and the partial and temporary were conceived of as if complete and eternal.

The modern conception of the immanence of God has revealed to us in larger measure the spiritual environment of man, that he lives, not in an arid desert with only its occasional divine oasis of Bible, Church and mira-

cle, but that he may find God on every hand, and that the revelation of this God is not confined to any book, to any historic people, to any single person, to any institution or to any occasional demonstrations, indeed, not confined to anything that is limited by time and space.

This is not, however, be it noted, to deny those supreme differences of degree which are so great that we may, for our convenience, call them differences in kind, albeit in a moral universe whose principle is unity there are, strictly speaking, no such. And a moral universe, with only one God, must be a moral universe of unity.

These valid and necessary distinctions, however, must neither deny nor obscure the eternal truth that, ever since the dawn of moral consciousness in man, there has been an ever-present, continuous and personally immediate revelation to every human soul.

The Rev. Edward M. Chapman, in his illuminating work, "The Dynamic of Christianity," has shown us that, again and again, the very men who have been deemed the

deniers of truth have left their heritage of truth, and the Gnostic and Montanist gave to their persecutors a doctrine which, while it has been too much obscured, has had its implicit life in the inner consciousness of Church and Christian, namely, the possibility of continued and immediate revelation of the truth to men, by the Holy Spirit, through a multitude of varied approaches. Nor has this Spirit come to man from a far-off God who dwelt without, but is the flaming up of a divine within.

This being true, to permit any form of revelation to rule further discovery of the Infinite out of court is simply to limit the presence of the Holy Spirit, and thus to limit the operations of the Infinite, and the Infinite himself, in time and space.

The third modern discovery of which we spoke, the resultant and the corollary of the other two, is the doctrine of the eternal progress of this revelation of the Spirit. It illuminates Pascal's saying that " humanity is a man who is to live forever and learn without ceasing." Thus, as Sabatier declares,

from this point of view, the moderns are the ancients, since they have a longer experience behind them. The ancients, on the contrary, are the children in truth, because they came in the early ages of the world. Jesus himself explicitly declared that he was not the ultimate object of men's faith, and the beautiful legend of the rending of the veil, while he hung upon the cross, is a sublime picture of the Holy place as accessible to every human soul.

Jesus gave to the world a new Book. He gave to the world himself. He gave to the world a Church. But his supreme gift was the consciousness of the Holy Spirit which should ultimately guide men into all truth, and who was necessary, in order that they should behold and appropriate him. He was the revealer of the revelation, but it was not in the form of a set of doctrines. It was something eternally living, the constant operation of the Spirit of God upon the human consciousness.

Thus, the center of gravity of the religious life, variously conceived as a book, person,

institution, and formula, is changed from these things which are without to something eternally within. The supreme gift of Jesus was the principle of the fraternal equality, the spiritual independence of God's children, grounded upon their filial relation to the Father to whom they were bound by the ever-present influences of the Spirit.

Christian revelation is thus not confined to a closed canon, to a stereotyped letter, to a divine person, to a divine confession; but is only contained in the immanence and continuity of that Spirit in the soul who inspired the writers of the book, who bears witness to the truth of the book, who makes the institution and the person themselves divine. Thus did Christ declare that the only unpardonable sin was, not even to stumble at himself, but the sin of denying to one's self, or of denying to any human soul, the influences of the Holy Ghost.

We may unhesitatingly affirm that we have emerged from deism, from tritheism, into a glorious spiritual pantheism. Not a materialistic pantheism, which is both the exagge-

ration and the limitation of truth, but the pantheism of the divine immanence in humanity, without any confines of mediation.

It declares, as Martineau says, that "divine guidance has never, and nowhere, failed to men, nor has it ever, in the most essential things, largely differed amongst them. The veil falls from the shadowed face of all external authority as such, and the directing love of the all-holy God shines forth." Under such a conception, we may behold, all along the pathway of life, sacred shrines like those upon some Alpine road.

As one star differs from another in glory, but all are set throughout the natural universe by God, and are his beacons of the night, so, while the moral lights of men which guide them on their way have differed in their splendor, they all reveal the guidance of the Father. To say, as men have said, that confessions and institutions may define the revelation is to set bounds to moral progress, and thus to close the way to heaven.

Our intellectual forms of faith are but attempts to express, in the language of the mind,

the feelings of the human heart, to search out the unsearchable and to express the inexpressible. All such are good and helpful, but they can never be perfect until the knowledge of man is equal to the knowledge of God.

Schleiermacher, one of the greatest of the prophets, gave us a new order of thought in declaring the religion of the heart to be the irreducible fact of experience which is anterior to any religious theory or form of doctrine which can only imperfectly express it. The common error of both rationalist and supernaturalist was in considering faith as a form of doctrine which one thought might be deduced from reason as a purely intellectual operation, and which the other believed to have fallen, at a given point in time, from heaven. And both rationalist and believer came to reduce religion and revelation to the contents of an intellectual operation.

The newer order of thought is that man receives life, and then, in trying to express that life in words, makes his own belief. This is not to deny the reaction of belief upon life. But the life is ever larger than any one

expression of it — indeed, than all expressions. The attempt to interpret the life has been treated as though it were the life which it imperfectly expresses.

Hence all dogmas, doctrines and orthodoxies in relation to Scripture, to Christ and the religious life of man are but the imperfect intellectual expressions of the common religious consciousness of the race. Thus no one man, no body of men, can give them perfect expression. Such could only be gained by bringing together the religious consciousness of every human being of every race. In the light of such an infinite task how marvelous has been the intellectual and moral self-sufficiency, not only of popes, but of councils of religious men! Thus neither Bible nor Church can be a principle or first cause, but only partial consequence and partial effect.

Viewed thus, all human truth and goodness are the consequences of revelation. It all springs from one source, and is instinct with one life — the life of the Spirit. Every human deed of love, every noble impulse, all

self-sacrificing service, is but this Spirit of God clothing itself with human personality, and all moral goodness is divine.

The result of this view is momentous, in that it leaves no such thing as orthodoxy, except as Sabatier defines it — the orthodoxy which is officially consecrated by immediate and temporary success. It transfers the emphasis of our evangelism from the acceptance of superimposed intellectual formulas to the moral action which is the resultant of the inner life of the Spirit.

The larger aims of the Protestant Reformation are only just being realized. The larger ideal which it saw by the Spirit was the transfer from the religion of a body politic to the religion of an immanent moral force interiorized within the soul—the principle of the autonomy of the Christian conscience. Unfortunately, the older principle did not die, and we lived, for a long time, under the halting substitution of the external authority of the revelation of Scripture for that of the Church.

It must be admitted that the controversy concerning the ultimate authority of the

Bible, Church or reason has been settled in favor of the reason, which itself is called to pass judgment on both Bible and Church. We must go further still, however. Human reason is the gift of God and must be guided by the Infinite mind. We have enlarged our conception of revelation and have come to consider it as the action of God upon both mind and heart through the Holy Spirit. The conception of the ultimate authority of the Scripture is most emphatically disavowed by the Scripture itself. The Fourth Gospel explicitly denies that inspired utterance ceased when the pen of its writer was laid down. The very doctrine of inspiration in this Gospel could be confined to no age or apostolic circle, neither in kind nor in degree. The free and unhampered use of the Old Testament by Jesus was a freedom which he bequeathed to his disciples for Testaments both Old and New, or any other book.

The view of the Gospel of John is that the religion of the Spirit existed before a single book of the Bible was written, and it still would have existed even if those books had

disappeared. Our modern reverent, so-called criticism of the Scripture is simply the doctrine that prayer and the seeking of the Holy Spirit must accompany the reading of the Bible, in order that we may rightly divide the word of truth.

The Church has disproved itself as ultimate authority. The alleged warfare between theology and science has, as Chapman says, really been the " conflict between institutionalism and science," and the spoils of battle are at least equal. While the Church is, and always has been, a conservator and mediator of the essential truth, it is, unfortunately, as a body, still loath to admit that the ultimate energy of the philosopher and the resident forces of the scientist and the immanent spirit of the theologian are but different terms of revelation, while the enlightened Christian conscience sees clearly that they are.

Those who shrink from accepting the doctrine of the ultimate authority of the revelation to the individual human soul, through the Holy Spirit, fall back from their defences

of infallibility in the Bible and say that, at least, then, Christ is the ultimate authority. The difficulty here is that it serves little for us to invoke the infallibility of Christ, when the infallibility of the Gospels has been sacrificed to historic criticism. The teachings of Jesus, moreover, so far as the letter is concerned, were limited by his age and environment. The reason of man, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is called for to interpret their principles in order to apply them to another age and surrounding. Jesus himself carefully told his disciples, not so much that they were to learn what he said, as to find for themselves the truth which he taught. They were to share his piety and to behold with their own eyes his vision of the Father. The Church has not followed his teaching when it has made him the object, instead of the vehicle and source of religion, and, changing him from the author into the end of faith, has many times put him in the place of God rather than as one who was to lead them to God.

Thus conceiving of the contents of reve-

lation as being nothing less than the immanent Holy Spirit in the life of man throughout all the time and space which he occupies, it appears that, while the Bible was being written to declare the revelation that came to some priests and prophets, the same revelation was being witnessed by other priests and prophets, and also by those who lived before and those who lived after.

Under this view, the incarnation is not only an historical event, but a universal and continuous process. Humanity was never left alone without the God whose child it is. Its theophanies have been in human forms, and theophanies in human lives did not begin at Bethlehem or end at Calvary. The angel came in and said unto her, " Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee. . . . And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God." The first mark of the incarnation was the stamping of motherhood with its

divineness. Page upon page of learned disquisition has been written to interpret this, and most of them have never touched its deeper meaning. Is the story true? To ask the question is to show that we have missed its deepest meaning. Over every mother, if she will but look and listen, is the angel. Upon her is the shadow of the Holy Spirit.

The Son of man is not a picture to be looked at by the sons of men and worshiped. He is the actual of all the holy prophecies in men. Not simply to behold him, but to recover his unutterable vision for ourselves is the loftiest aim of human heart and mind. To see his God, to grasp his interpretation of our own souls, are the supreme achievements set before the race. His consciousness, so far as gained, is its superlative possession. This Son of God is likewise Son of man. He has revealed not only God to men, but God in man.

Humanity can never gain its end by gazing at a portrait of the Master. It must apprehend his mind and gain his spirit and his life. Without the immanence of Christ, his heavenly transcendence can have no vital meaning for

the sons of men. And as his actual contrast between himself and men is an eternal ground of faith, so must his essential kinship with the race be its eternal ground of hope.

The actual contrast between the Son of God and the sons of men is identical with the moral difference between the finite and the Infinite. Then must as well the identity of the sons of men with Jesus be the ground of their consciousness as the children of God. The incarnation was in man then, that its presence in men might be perfectly revealed. This was Christ's ideal for his disciples, and the eternally enduring evolution of the race is first to apprehend and then to gain in partial, but in growing, measure the mind, the heart, and the life of the eternal Son.

This, then, becomes the deeper meaning of the incarnation; the witness of divinity within our humble life, touched by the divine in Christ to bring it to fulfilment. It is the pledge and the interpretation of God's eternal life within his children. The transcendence of the Master, by his immanence, becomes

the pledge of the transcendence of our present selves.

To apprehend the moral magnitude and contemplate the spiritual force of Jesus is a sovereign desire of the mind of man, and to appropriate his life, the loftiest endeavor of a human soul. As Son of man and Son of God, the witness and the earnest of the heavenly childhood of the race, he is the sovereign possession of mankind. But to gain the view and the interpretation of the Christ, which the Gospel writers give us, is not enough. To gain any view of Christ is not enough. The unceasing effort of the human mind, its loftiest endeavor, is to see the things he saw and feel the feelings that he felt, — that we might do this, he left us the bequest of the Holy Spirit.

So, while bibles are both read and written, while creeds and confessions are both made and re-made, while institutions seek to conserve, embody and reveal God's truth, no one of these, nor all of these together, can define or contain within themselves the revelation of the Infinite to men.

It comes in many ways. It is contained in myriads of forms. It is expressed and lives its life on every hand. It takes the form of many holy books and many sacred institutions, but it is confined within no separate sphere of action. It is the life of God, through his Holy Spirit, taking the form to-day of a righteous civic consciousness, as the revelation comes and reveals the truth, justice and righteousness against the present background of fraud, injustice and unholy bribes. It may take the form of burning, righteous protest against accepting, in the name of God and Christ, unholy gains, which are unlawful for a sacred treasury, because they are the price of blood.

The revelation sheds its light upon the host of human beings who toil by day and night for the support in luxury of Dives and his friends, and its light shed upon a labor union may transform it to a holy institution. The revelation may take the form of the vision of sacred brotherhood against the somber background of despotism, cruelty, hate, and unbridled lust, and may shine from

America on far-off Russia or the woeful hell of Turkey; and the impulse of the Holy Spirit may arm the warships and consecrate, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, their every gun, under its other names of human brotherhood and justice. It lives in every human deed of righteousness and love.

Everywhere the Holy Spirit does his work. To write a bible, to experience an incarnation, to possess a sacred altar, with its holy fire, are the privileges of every human soul. A bible writ by other men is not enough. The incarnation as an historic fact in a single person must be as well a universal impartation. No formulary of a council can express for any human soul its own experience. No age can do it for another age. No church can take the place of the Holy of holies, where the human soul, in the inviolable solitude of its own personality, stands face to face with the divine reality. The burning bush is ever at the feet of every man. Nature, the Bible, the Church, the Christ, — all these and countless other media, varying in their measure, are,

by the Spirit, the means of revelation, but no one of them exhausts it.

This is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The hairs of every human head are numbered, and there are as many revelations as there are human souls. The content of revelation is the total consciousness of God in all the human souls from the beginnings of moral consciousness in man to the very present moment.

> "Speak to Him, thou, for he hears,
> And Spirit with spirit can meet —
> Closer is He than breathing,
> And nearer than hands and feet."

It is expedient, then, that Scripture should confess its temporary partialness; that the Church should feel that it is smaller than the kingdom; that men should look for spiritual visions and not for puzzling signs; that creeds should say, The truth is larger than us all, and truer.

"Yea," says the Christ himself, "it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Spirit will not come."

Does this mean that every book is a Bible, every man a Christ and every human insti-

tution a Church? No, it does not mean that any other book is a Bible, any other being a Christ, or any other body a holy Church. But it does mean that revelation and inspiration are all-comprehending moral terms, that the incarnation is a universal process and that the kingdom of God, like the word of God, knows no limitations of time and space. It does not dispose of all objective authority, for we are bound to take into account, not only the Holy Spirit as it speaks to us, but also as it speaks to other men. But the Holy Spirit within the individual soul must be the divider and interpreter, and such authority is not an imposition, but is itself a gift of the Spirit. Evolution is both an unfolding from within and an infolding from without. The great idea of unity does not deny diversity. Identity is not inconsistent with variety. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory."

Under any other view than that of moral identity and unity the incarnation is meaningless. There can never be attainableness

without essential unity between that which is and that which is to be. The unity and universality of revelation are essential to a moral universe.

Does this mean a lesser bible? No, it only means that the Bible is the means and not the end of revelation. Does this mean that the inner circle of disciples which we call the Church has lost its individuality? No, it only means a larger Church created by it. Is a superannuated Christ the consequence of this mode of thought? No, it remains true that there is one Bible, that the twelve disciples are still existent as an inner circle of the Seventy. Jesus Christ is sovereign and eternal.

"It is expedient for you that I go away." "But I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." He it is who leads his own beyond the outer Gentile court of institutions, beyond the mediating sanctuaries, to the very Holy of holies, where the individual soul in the inviolable solitude of its personality stands face to face with the divine reality, and all are there, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

AMEN.